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Poverty and underdevelopment are the predominant signifiers attached to the nations that make up Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). Indeed, popular understandings and scholarly discourses are replete with SSA being synonymous with corruption; failed states; foreign aid dependency; extensive suffering as depicted by the many brutal conflicts and wars, famine and infrastructural inadequacies – such as lack of access to education and healthcare services. The paradoxical reality is that SSA is one of the richest areas in the world in terms of its natural and human resources. Equally, however, existing bodies of literature as well as lay understandings relating to the root causes of and manifestations of poverty and underdevelopment are from varied but narrow perspectives.

The purpose of this conceptual dissertation is to defend my argument that colonial and neocolonial structures and mechanisms are major contributory factors to the realities I identify above. In this way, poverty and underdevelopment in SSA are humanly constructed phenomena, and as such possibilities exist to address these conditions. I have distinguished education as an effective mechanism to enact social change in SSA, specifically within the framework of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063. Therefore, I offer alternative perspectives on the poverty and underdevelopment scenario in SSA; particularly by exploring their structures and mechanisms of colonialism and

neocolonialism through critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory. I also present an expanded vision of education organic to the realities of SSA that can develop critical awareness, to essentially create a new African citizen who can function as an effective change agent for ensuring sustainable development in SSA.

AN EXPLORATION OF POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN  
SUB SAHARAN AFRICA THROUGH CRITICAL THEORY,  
CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND POST-COLONIAL  
THEORY PERSPECTIVES

by

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Approved by

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Committee Chair

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## DEDICATION

Praise be to God. The Lord of all the worlds.

My beloved grandma – The Late Haja Abie Sanu Zubairu (Mammie).  
May we be reunited in Jannah by His permission and grace. Ameen.

To the past, present and future generations of Sub Saharan Africans.  
In recognition of our intergenerational mission towards decolonizing our minds  
and the quest for meaningful and complete independence.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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Whosoever of you sees an injustice, let them change it with their hand. If they are not able to do so, then [let them change it] with their tongue. If they are not able to do so, then with their heart, but that is the weakest of faith. [Mohamad (pbuh), the Prophet of Islam].

My parents: Baba - my first love. The man who ignited the spark for critical engagement with the world, even before I was aware of the term ‘critical’. Maina (MD) - Me mammy way born me. For instilling the importance and value of education in my young brain. Your stoic presence, unwavering love, encouragement and constant dua’as means the world.

Kotor Ahmed/Dr. T. – indeed souls attract. May we remain united and be reunited. My children – Ahmad Deen, Khalid & Hawa. You finally have your Dr. Mama. Appreciate your patience and support. Lots of love. Also, to my siblings – Ja Juldeh is no longer a professional student. You too will be unable to turn off Baba’s voice. To my uhktis, I appreciate your prayers and sisterhood. May He continue to unite our hearts.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES .....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Study .....	8
Research Question .....	10
A Grim – but Hopeful Situation.....	10
Grim Realities .....	10
Hopeful – The Possibilities of Education .....	13
Critical Reflection and Positionality .....	21
Background Context .....	23
Conceptualizing Sub Saharan Africa .....	24
Strategic Essentialism .....	27
Immediate Post-colonial SSA .....	29
The ‘Resource Curse’ .....	30
The Structures of Imperialism .....	34
Colonialism .....	34
Neocolonialism .....	35
Decolonization agreements.....	35
The cold war .....	35
Neoliberalism.....	36
Education as a Sociocultural Mechanism .....	38
Significance of the Study .....	39
Organization of the Study .....	45
 II. BACKGROUND CONTEXT: POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT, AND THE IMPERIAL PROJECT IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA .....	 49
Introduction.....	49
Poverty and Underdevelopment – Overview .....	50
Neocolonial Structures of the Imperial Project.....	53
The Uninterrupted Imperial Project in SSA.....	54
Colonialism/Colonization .....	56
Civilizing mission or ‘La Mission Civilisatrice’ .....	59
African resistance to colonial rule .....	63



Decolonization and Post-colonialism .....	64
Neocolonialism .....	65
Decolonization agreements .....	67
Cold War .....	68
Neoliberal globalization or globalization of neoliberalism .....	69
Globility, globalization and neoliberal globalization .....	70
Neoliberalism and neoliberal globalization .....	72
Neoliberal globalization – implications for SSA .....	76
Neocolonial Mechanisms of the Imperial Project .....	79
Economic Mechanisms .....	79
Expropriation of land .....	79
Control of natural resources, markets, systems, and methods of production .....	81
Foreign aid/debt/loans .....	83
Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) .....	85
Political Mechanisms .....	90
Divide and rule .....	90
Hierarchical leadership .....	92
Institutions – IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Criminal Court (ICC) .....	92
Military presence and/or interventions and defense agreements .....	94
Strongman leadership to enforce policies .....	97
Conclusion .....	101

### III. BACKGROUND CONTEXT: HISTORY OF EDUCATION – FROM PRE-COLONIAL TO POST-COLONIAL SUB SAHARAN AFRICA .....

103

Introduction .....	103
My Philosophical Understandings of Education .....	105
Education as a Sociocultural Mechanism .....	107
Pre-colonial Education or Traditional Education .....	108
Islamic Influences .....	109
Pre-colonial Epistemology .....	112
Pre-colonial Pedagogy .....	114
Pedagogical approaches .....	115
African Philosophical Foundations of Education .....	119

Imperial Education.....	121
Colonial Education.....	122
Colonial epistemology .....	124
Characteristics of colonial education .....	126
Colonial pedagogy .....	131
The adapted and academic curriculum .....	132
Imperial attempts to control access to education .....	134
The pacifist evangelical curriculum.....	139
Post-colonial Education or Neoliberal Education.....	141
The neoliberal pedagogy.....	142
The neoliberal pedagogy within the SSA context.....	149
Attempts at post-colonial education reform.....	152
Conclusion .....	159

#### IV. POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA – IMPERIAL LEGACIES.....161

Introduction.....	161
Economic Legacies of the Imperial Project .....	163
Overspecialization.....	163
Foreign Aid/Overseas or Official Development Assistance (ODA) .....	169
Culture of aid dependency .....	171
Diminished state/governance accountability .....	173
Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool.....	178
The debt trap .....	179
Donor interference and meddling .....	184
‘Significant knowledge problems’/’an African statistical tragedy’ .....	186
Resource Flight .....	193
Capital flight .....	194
Revenue extraction.....	195
Tax evasion through transfer mispricing and trade mis-invoicing.....	196
Odious debt.....	197
Human capital flight or brain drain.....	200
Political Legacies of the Imperial Project .....	202
Authoritarian Leadership Structures/Leadership Challenges.....	203
Wars, Conflicts, and Violence .....	208
Sociocultural Legacies of the Imperial Project – Education.....	213
Elitist Education.....	214

Irrelevant Curriculum.....	217
Schizophrenic Identifications.....	218
Conclusion .....	222

## V. THE IMPERIAL PROJECT THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL THEORY, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, AND POST-COLONIAL THEORY .....223

Introduction.....	223
The Uncritical Dominant Perspective of Poverty and Underdevelopment in SSA .....	225
A Reframing.....	227
Reframing Sub Saharan Africa .....	227
Theories – Overview.....	229
Critical Theory.....	231
History.....	231
Tenets and application to SSA.....	232
Social construction of reality .....	232
The critique of domination.....	233
Power dynamics within the totality of society .....	233
A commitment to praxis.....	234
Critical analysis – the Imperial Project, poverty, and underdevelopment .....	234
In response to the Imperial Project – limitations and possibilities.....	240
Post-colonial Theory.....	241
History.....	242
Tenets and application to SSA.....	244
Orientalism.....	245
Hegemony/subalternity .....	247
Psychological imperialism.....	252
Critical analysis – the Imperial Project, poverty, and underdevelopment .....	256
In response to the Imperial Project – limitations and possibilities.....	271
Critical Pedagogy.....	273
History.....	274
Tenets and application to SSA.....	274
The ongoing process of democratization .....	274
Role of culture.....	276
Teachers and students as transformative intellectuals .....	278
Language of hope and possibility .....	280

Critical analysis – the Imperial Project, poverty, and underdevelopment .....	280
In response to the Imperial Project – limitations and possibilities.....	286
Conclusion .....	287
VI. VISION FOR THE FUTURE AND CONCLUSION .....	289
Introduction.....	289
Background to Agenda 2063 .....	291
Educational Aims of Agenda 2063 .....	292
A Critical and Expanded Vision of Education Aligned to Agenda 2063 .....	295
My Philosophical Understandings of Education.....	295
Critical Pedagogy (A Summary) and African Theorizing on Education .....	296
Societal Framework .....	300
Critical Pedagogy Aligned to Agenda 2063 .....	302
Critical pedagogy for decolonizing – rejecting the banking concept of education .....	303
Interrogating dominant epistemologies – critical reviews of education systems .....	305
Reviving dormant epistemologies – a critical but inevitable return to the past.....	307
A reconstruction – an African centered pedagogy.....	311
An African centered pedagogy of the oppressed.....	313
Agenda 2063 – a way forward.....	315
Aligning national aims and priorities to education .....	316
Critical reflections on current education configurations .....	318
Logistics of and Impediments to Implementation .....	330
Conclusions.....	333
Suggestions for Future Research .....	337
Closing Reflections.....	339
REFERENCES .....	343

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Map of Sub Saharan Africa with Countries ( <a href="http://www.state.gov">www.state.gov</a> ) .....	6
Figure 2. Characteristics of Underdeveloped Nations .....	12
Figure 3. Reasons for Imperialism.....	55
Figure 4. Colonial Africa .....	59
Figure 5. The MDGs & SDGs .....	89
Figure 6. Cultural Policy and the African Union’s Agenda 2063 by R. S. Mabote, Directorate of Strategic Policy Planning, AUC .....	292
Figure 7. The Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16-25) .....	293

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACO	The African Curriculum Organization
AfDF	African Development Fund
AFRICOM	United States African Command
ANC	Africa National Congress
AU	African Union
CESA	The Continental Education Strategy
EFA	Education for All
ESN	The European Services Network
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIPCs	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HDI	Human Development Index
ICC	The International Chamber of Commerce
ICC	International Criminal Court
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MDRI	Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative

MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
SSAs	Sub Saharan Africans (Africans)
TNCs	Transnational Corporations
USCSI	The U.S. Coalition of Service Industries
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational & Scientific and Cultural
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	The World Trade Organization

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

I arrived eagerly at Lungi International Airport, located in Lungi, Sierra Leone, West Africa one December evening from London Heathrow Airport to spend winter break with my family. I was in school in London away from my family at the time. As I descended the steps from the airplane, walked on the tarmac, eventually reached the airport building and proceeded to navigate the frenzied and tedious processes of clearances from immigration, customs control, baggage collection and so on, the transition of effortless travel from the so called ‘first world’ with functional systems to the so called ‘third world’ with either semi-functional or nonfunctional systems and the specific challenges that comes with this experience became even more apparent. It was impossible to proceed from any of these clearance stations without some form of money exchange to officials in charge – call it a tip or bribery, but that was the normalized expectation in a land where people are always trying to make ends meet. Of course, I had made this trip several times before, but this was to become particularly poignant.

Lungi is a coastal town located in the extreme western region of Sierra Leone. The most common travel mode of reaching the mainland, the capital city Freetown<sup>1</sup> at that time was by an hour government ferry ride run or between three to five hours by road

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<sup>1</sup>Freetown was established by the British as a colony for freed and repatriated slaves.



—depending on road conditions. When available there was a private helicopter service for those who can afford and want to avoid the sometimes-irregular ferry service. This time, I was to travel by ferry. Unfortunately, there was an unknown waiting time. The only ferry available was delayed. The waiting area comprised of a sizeable open-air beachfront hut. It was powered with a generator for electricity; however, it was pitch dark outside the perimeter of the waiting area. I am sure during the day with the sound of the waves crashing on the shore, the experience would have been quite different, but not that night.

As we waited, the locals increasingly flocked to the waiting area. They were dressed invariably in well-worn shabby clothes. From outside the hut, they were desperately trying to sell from their paltry wares – bottles of water, one or two packets of biscuits, some candies and other small nick knacks. Others were just loitering through. The most memorable were the young children, peering at us from the outside with desperate and doleful eyes. My mind began to wander. A violent rebel movement that was demanding socioeconomic and political inclusion in the affairs of Sierra Leone was beginning to gain foothold in the towns and villages situated alongside our neighboring country Liberia, and was already laying waste to those areas. However, as this systematic violence and destruction was taking place ‘over there’ and had not yet directly impacted upon us the people in Freetown and its immediate surrounding areas, the movement and the destruction were of course considered inconsequential. Upon eavesdropping on some adult conversations, I had heard the sentiments expressed variously that the subsistent living conditions of ordinary Sierra Leoneans was untenable and that eventually the citizens will come to demand their rights.

My family's socioeconomic status afforded those who remained in Sierra Leone a certain level of comfort and protection. Personally, I was safely ensconced in my life overseas and besides, logistically, Lungi located in the far western area of Sierra Leone was not regarded as an area under imminent threat given that the destruction was taking place in the far eastern part of the country. Nevertheless, sitting in that beachfront hut, with other JCs<sup>2</sup> and a cross representation of Sierra Leoneans basking in our various degrees of socioeconomic status and privilege, at the same time surrounded by the locals in their corresponding various degrees of evident despair peering at us was a very uncomfortable feeling. I was at that moment truly unsure of the intentions of my fellow citizens. I was convinced and terrified that at any moment they too were going to rise up to demand their rights upon us that evening. However, revolution did not materialize in Lungi that night. The ferry eventually arrived and I managed to make it home to my expectant family. However, in what is now recorded in the annals of history as the Sierra Leone Civil War, the rebel movement of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which comprised of a cross section of Sierra Leoneans did eventually enter the capital city to indeed demand their rights. The ten year civil war engulfed and decimated the entire country. The repercussions of this war still endure.

Although I have always been aware of poverty and underdevelopment in my country, my experiences at Lungi gave me a new and heightened understanding of the poverty and underdevelopment crisis within it. During my four-week stay in Sierra

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<sup>2</sup>Just Cam' (In English - Just Arrived). A local term used to describe Sierra Leoneans who reside in Western countries but are in the country visiting.

Leone, I came across many fellow citizens with the same desperate and doleful eyes, hawking their paltry wares. There were also many desperate visits and encounters with family members, neighbors, friends even some strangers all asking for help with paying school fees for themselves or their children; seeking help for capital to startup businesses, to pay rent, buy food and on and on – basic necessities for survival. I encountered all the above situations in all the places I visited.

Indeed, in an environment where statistics on poverty indicators according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, n.d.– About Sierra Leone) places average life expectancy at 48 years, poverty rate at 78% and youth unemployment 70%, the glimpses of the trappings of a wealthy society tinged with poverty and underdevelopment were ironic. Nice and luxurious cars, houses, shops and lifestyles juxtaposed with poverty in the same neighborhoods characterized by, for example, shanty towns that were replete with houses made of tin, commonly referred to as ‘pan body’ in the Sierra Leone vernacular. Furthermore, there was the glaring dearth of adequate amenities and infrastructure – running water, regular supply of electricity and good roads - a lack of associated back up facilities to sustain the trappings of wealth. For example, those of us living in big houses experienced power outages, but we could afford generators to supplement on those outage days. We could also afford to pay private companies to truck in water to fill our water tanks attached to our houses on days when the taps ran dry, unlike the vast majority who with buckets have to go search for water in neighborhoods where the taps still run. As such, regardless of one’s social class or wealth status within the communities of Sierra Leone, the deep rooted and pervasive realities of poverty and

underdevelopment exposed all members of society to the ongoing residual effects a dysfunction system brought about by the realities of poverty and underdevelopment.

At the end of four weeks, I once again made the trip back to Lungi Airport. This time however, it was in daylight and there were no delays, but again through the frenzied and tedious clearance processes with a tip or bribery to the various airport staff. Eventually, I boarded my flight for Heathrow Airport and back to my effortless travel and day-to-day experience of living in the developed world, unlike many other Sub Saharan Africans (Africans) who cannot afford to escape their miserable realities.

I begin this dissertation with this story because I wanted to take the time to briefly give a visceral image that captures experiences of a world that might perhaps be unfamiliar, especially to my readers from Western countries: the realities of living in an environment of abject poverty, underdevelopment and hopelessness of those Sierra Leoneans whom I directly or indirectly encountered, in stark contrast to lifestyle of those I now refer to as the one percentage of Sierra Leoneans, a classification of which I am a part. These experiences and realities are not unique to Sierra Leone. They are quite symptomatic of life in the countries (Fig. 1) that make up Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). I use the term SSA to refer to a particular region of the continent. SSA is a construct used widely and consistently in the literature to signify the geographical area of the African continent located south of the Sahara Desert; the Sahara Desert dividing Islamic Northern Africa from SSA. Indeed, even as you read this, countless Africans must contend with these evident inequalities and inferior living standards in various degrees all over the region.



Figure 1. Map of Sub Saharan Africa with Countries (www.state.gov)

The paradox in SSA's poverty and underdevelopment is that the region is one of the richest areas in the world in terms of its natural and human resources. It is well endowed with immense cultural, ecological and economic diversity (Williams, 1997; Ayee, 2014). Since the 1960s, this enormous wealth of Africa has been documented by scholars such as Nkrumah (1965) and Diop (1974). Yet in what is commonly referred to as the multipronged 'tragedy' of SSA (Lumumba, 2015), available data and the qualitative reality consistently indicate that the region continues to be embroiled in sustained socio-economic retrogression (Moyo, 2009a & b; UNDP, 2014).

In this dissertation, I argue that the ideological concept of imperialism is the major factor that upholds this poverty and underdevelopment regression in SSA. I name this the uninterrupted imperial project in SSA. I use the term uninterrupted imperial project or the imperial project to indicate, firstly, that access to raw materials and other resources characterized and continues to characterize the relationship between imperialism and SSA. Therefore, the imperial project signifies that political independence from colonial rule did not necessarily translate into total self-determination for former colonies. Thus, I use the term firstly to convey the thought that even when formerly colonized SSA nations gained political independence, imperial powers continued to exert influence in the internal affairs of SSA through structures that practically manifest their powers such as the cold war, decolonization agreements and neoliberal globalization (Schneider, 2003; Carmody, 2010; Maathai, 2011 & Bush 2014). SSA scholars have also named this continued interference in the internal affairs of SSA in the post-colonial era as neocolonialism (Nkrumah, 1965). Secondly, these imperial structures have in turn spawned amongst themselves economic, political and sociocultural mechanisms or tools that ensure the fundamental objective of imperialism. The ultimate goals of these mechanisms include ensuring that the access, control and exploitation of the vast natural resources within SSA nations flourish to the advantage of imperial powers.

I also argue that education has been used by imperial structures as a socio-cultural mechanism to cultivate a kind of citizenry in SSA that perpetuates the imperial status quo. Socio-cultural factors are those set of traditions, belief systems and habits that characterize a population (van Steensel, 2006). Thus, I use sociocultural mechanisms to

indicate the manners in which the imperial project hegemonically influences these lifestyles, customs and value systems through the education process. As such, the realities of the poverty dilemma and the hegemonic imposition of imperial education in SSA obscure the platform from which citizens of SSA nations can engage in widespread, meaningful and coordinated critical activities to alleviate their condition. However, I maintain that education can and must play an important role in responding to SSA's poverty and underdevelopment challenges. I argue therefore for a critical vision of education, as opposed to a system of education embedded in the socio-cultural mechanisms of imperialism, as a response to these pressing realities. Such a critical version of education is essential as the majority of post-colonial education reforms in SSA are still deeply aligned to imperial constructs (McGrath, 2011).

My usage of the term education denotes the learning process that can take place within the formal setting (schools, universities) as well as informal environments (media, popular culture), and non-formal education in flexible learning spaces that intersect between formal and informal learning environments (social and adult education and distance learning settings).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Poverty and underdevelopment are shared SSA experiences that have spanned the colonial era and continue to plague post-colonial states. In an area rich in natural resources, human capacity and potential, SSA's economic stagnation and subsequent marginalization is a contradictory reality. Furthermore, the inadequacy of education systems within the continent to provide foundational support for students to engage the

dynamics of poverty, underdevelopment and the realities of the imperial project in a critical manner compounds the fate of many Africans. Bowden & Mosley (2008) state, “the cure of any ill requires an understanding of its deep-rooted causes” (p. 987).

Thus, I posit that SSA is experiencing the lingering and residual effects of imperialism, and that Africans unresolved relationship and inadequate understanding of the imperial project within the context of the region plays a major role in SSA’s predicament. That is, as a people, Africans have not had the opportunity to collectively and significantly grapple with both the exploitation inherent within the structures of imperialism, and the role that Africans themselves, whether actively or passively, play in perpetuating this status quo.

However, it is my view that studies on education in SSA have not sufficiently sought to address these challenges from the perspective of the conceptual basis of the structures of education. As such, I hypothesize likewise that Africans remain largely unaware of the current configurations in our education systems and their connections to our imperial legacy. Nevertheless, I also believe that with further exploration and understanding, SSA education systems can be re-conceptualized into models of education that serve as a catalyst to address the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Therefore, in this study, I explore how critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory may be employed to analyze the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment that plague SSA, and the extent to which these theories may offer paths forward for addressing these challenges. I believe this task is potentially fertile, as



the body of literature comprising these theories has not been sufficiently explored within the SSA context.

Specifically, I defend two theses. One, that education can play an important role in responding to development challenges, and two, that a critical vision of education is a means to overcoming social, political, and economic development challenges. Toward these, I describe and promote a critical lens for understanding SSA's persistent poverty and its counterpart underdevelopment.

### **Research Question**

How can the understanding of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA through critical and post-colonial theoretical lenses open up possibilities for reframing education in SSA?

### **A Grim - but Hopeful Situation**

Even though the economic records of the region's countries remain diverse and distinct, the overall postcolonial reality in SSA is that of pervasive economic failure and corresponding devastating sociocultural consequences as a result of poverty and underdevelopment. Nevertheless, I contend that as Africans we must remain hopeful in the possibilities of education to help alleviate such devastating paralysis within our continent.

### **Grim Realities**

For the purposes of this dissertation, Alkire's (2007) "qualitative dimensions of poverty" is most relevant to my understanding of poverty and underdevelopment. These qualitative aspects of poverty are hard to quantify, but they are all the same, of immense and significant value to those living in poverty conditions. Sen (1993) summarizes these

qualitative dimensions as exclusion, limited choices and unfulfilled capabilities. In agreement with Alkire and Sen, I adopt the United Nations (UN) (2009) definition of poverty<sup>3</sup> which is:

a denial of choices and opportunities and a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.

Likewise, in conceptualizing underdevelopment some scholars help us to create tangible images and characteristics of what underdevelopment in societies, communities and nations entails. Paul G. Hoffman in Fernando (2011) states, that

anybody would know an underdeveloped country when he sees one ... it is characterized by poverty, with beggars in the cities and villagers eking out a bare subsistence in the rural areas. It is a country lacking factories of its own, usually with inadequate supplies of power and light. It usually has insufficient roads and rail-roads, insufficient government services and poor communication. It has few hospitals and few institutions of higher learning (p. 184).

Furthermore, scholars such as Leibenstein (1957); Fernando (2011); Todaro & Smith (2012) and Marcel (2013) all invariably present distinguishing elements of underdevelopment in a society. Following these descriptions, I summarize that underdevelopment is characterized by all or some of what I represent in Figure 2.

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<sup>3</sup>The UN in addition to economic considerations significantly broadens the parameters of defining poverty to include other dimensions of poverty.

Therefore, for the purposes of this dissertation, the parameters within which I understand the concepts of poverty and underdevelopment are consistent with the UN's definitions of poverty as well as the tangible characteristics of underdevelopment I have summarized in Figure 2 below.

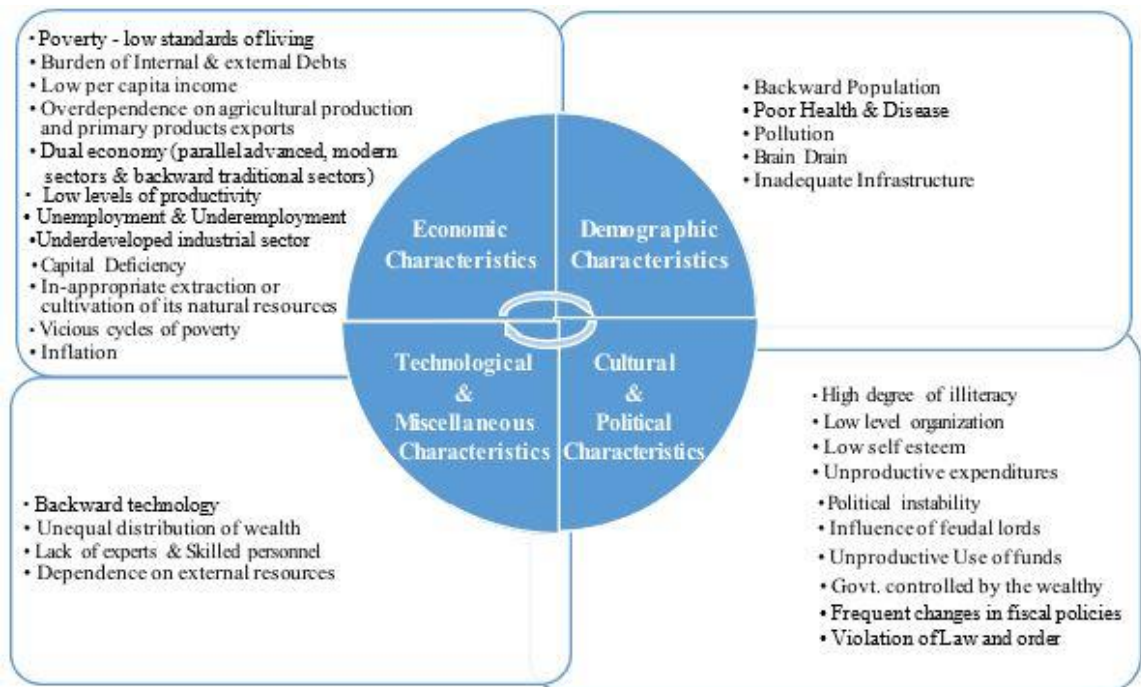


Figure 2. Characteristics of Underdeveloped Nations

In reviewing the literature and discourses on poverty and underdevelopment, I found statistical and qualitative data confirm the grim realities of poverty and underdevelopment within the SSA context. The Kenyan political and environmentalist Wangari Maathai (2011) comments that, “in looking ahead to the challenges of Africa, many heads of states will tell you that the greatest challenge they face is poverty and underdevelopment” (p. 1). Each generation of people from SSA since independence, has

had to deal with the reality of lower standards of living than those of the previous generation. According to Takeuchi & Aginamio (2011) these include lack of basic access to quality of life and economic opportunities, thereby creating and sustaining conditions for a ‘prolonged developmental crisis’. Likewise, Bond (2006) confirms that even considering “the most banal measure of poverty, SSA is still getting progressively poorer” (p. 6). Hope (2009) further shows that SSA countries have the highest levels of urban poverty in the world. Austine and Stephen (2013) point out SSA’s low life expectancy rates, lack of access to safe drinking water, and starvation because of the crisis in food self-sufficiency on the continent. This is paradoxical given the abundance of fertile land and that subsistence farming is a mainstay in SSA rural communities.

### **Hopeful – The Possibilities of Education**

I submit that this sustained socioeconomic retrogression is a direct consequence of SSA’s leadership seeming incapacity to harness the potential of its citizenry, especially within the realm of education, and to promote a collective sense of agency in order to enact positive changes that will align with social realities. It is in part a failure to employ education as an institution to play a foundational role in creating and sustaining environments that facilitate mass cultivation of this sense of agency that will allow Africans to address the pervasive human socioeconomic development failure in SSA. An education experience that aligns with the social realities in SSA has the potential to promote this collective sense of agency and open up possibilities to enact positive changes. Such an education experience can counter the imperial project which continues to use education as a sociocultural mechanism to assimilate the people of SSA into the

social process of the dominant imperial structure, to further enable the ultimate aim of imperialism. It is an experience that will formalize and sensitize the citizenry of SSA to conceive the goal of education as creating the mental ability to discern and determine the inequalities in society, so as to “develop a sense of possibility that can enable our youth to reimagine our world as one based on care compassion and justice for all” (Shapiro, 2006 p.126).

In general, imperial education continues to produce a cadre of successful ‘educated’ elites amongst succeeding generations of Africans. These professional elites, who are well versed in the mechanistic aspects of education, are inheritors of the imperial system who in their various professional capacities continue to perpetuate the imperial system. Sometimes, however, social mobility of citizens from poor background to the professional elite class can be attained through the education system. Most poignant however, is that the educational infrastructures are not avenues that allows for critical or meaningful discourse on the apparent inequality and disparity resulting from poverty and underdevelopment. This is because as explained by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), imperial education is “largely a laboratory for Westernization that produces African elites who are alienated from their societies and cultures” (p.177). As a result of this detachment, the majority of Africans are destined to remain poor, as the socioeconomic aims and goals of the educated and professional elites now in their various roles of governmental and non-governmental leadership positions are not necessarily in convergence with those of the wider African community.

It would be unjustified to interpret what I have said so far to mean that Africans have not demonstrated noticeable agency in highlighting the relationships between these interrelated concepts of poverty, underdevelopment, education and imperialism. Indeed, marginalized communities, where most Africans live, are not only inherently aware of their circumstances but also bring with them a plethora of resources or “funds of knowledge” (Moll et al, 1992) to make sense of their lived realities. These funds described by Yosso (2005) as community cultural wealth, continue to enable and allow a segment of Africans to make sense of their interactions and survive within the imperial project. This is one of the ways in which I envisage education to be capable of being used as a positive sociocultural mechanism to address the challenges of imperial hegemonic structures and mechanisms and their stated consequences in SSA.

Indeed, it was a generation of African intellectuals, themselves products of colonial imperial education, who used knowledge gained from the colonial system as a vehicle for successfully challenging the system of colonial rule and achieving independence. In the postcolonial era, several African scholars such as Moumouni, (1968), Ali Mazrui (1980, 1986, 2002); Cheik Anta Diop (1987) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1965, 1988, 2004) have undertaken and disseminated significant academic research and scholarship that highlights pressing issues on the continent. Likewise, indigenous organizations and entities are gaining momentum in their collective agenda to remind their fellow Africans and the rest of the world united in common humanity of the pressing realities that plague the region, and the importance of finding common ground that will help to decipher how the twin issues of poverty and underdevelopment can be

addressed. These include for example, the African Institute for Leaders and Leadership (AFLI) headquartered in South Africa and the Movement for Economic Freedom (MEF) in Zambia. The AFLI's vision is to train future African leaders to gravitate toward African-led solutions to address Africa's challenges, whilst the MEF is committed to ensuring economic freedom, self-rule, social independence, freedom of expression, equality and active citizenship.

Concerning African agency, some glimmers of hope have also emerged in the light of the African Union's (AU) Agenda 2063 entitled 'The Africa We Want' (African Union, 2013). Agenda 2063 is a concerted effort to rethink the future and chart a new direction for SSA. This agenda combines an ambitious vision with an action plan intended to drive Africa's change, development, and transformation for the next 50 years. Agenda 2063 is indeed an acknowledgement as well as a reflection on the determination of Africans to take ownership of strategies for poverty elimination and sustainable development. This goal would see African states reduce extreme poverty to below 10% by 2045, and 3% by 2063 (Turner et al, 2014; DeGhetto et al, 2016).

However, whilst the initiatives of Agenda 2063 are laudable, there are still areas of significant concerns (Acemah, 2015). Of relevance to this dissertation is that of education. Although education is included as an integral part of Agenda 2063, discussion on the role of education is largely focused on its instrumental purpose of furthering the neoliberal agenda of the growing global market or economic growth models in which citizens are either producers or consumers. What this means is that Agenda 2063 promotes skills-based education, (Jalata, 2014) or education in terms of access, quality

and equity (Luescher, 2016). Giroux (2011), refers to these models as education grounded in neoliberal pedagogy. Such particular emphasis on economic dimensions of education negates the broader aims of education which entails developing a system of education grounded in the practice of critical thinking and social justice that will create a type of mindset within the population and enable the aspirations of Agenda 2063 to take root and thrive.

Indeed, according to Freire (1998), the institution of education must play an integral role to help students develop the capacity to recognize “the dialectical relation between a reading of the world and a reading of the word” (p. 79). Freire should be constructed as meaning that, education must and should surpass simply the ability to read, write and be well versed in abstract mechanistic knowledge and information. It must be used as a vehicle to develop the capacity for critical thinking in order to help people to decode and understand the social world and circumstances of their lived experiences. Arguably, even persons with a high level of ‘education’ in SSA, especially among the elites in society, can be said to lack the qualities Freire indicates and are therefore significantly constrained to promote change.

Like Freire, critical educational theorists (Giroux, 1985, 1994 & 2011; Kellner, 2000, 2003) argue that not only must schooling provide avenues for students to recognize the challenges inherent in their world, but also the institution of education must foster the development of tools to enable students to address these problematic realities. In my view, education systems in SSA are caught up in colonial and neocolonial logic which makes most of their students typically learn to reproduce and perpetuate a problematic



status quo. As such, these educational systems arguably continue to produce significant number of students and citizens with seemingly limited capacity to critically engage the dynamics of sustained poverty, underdevelopment and their inherent connections with the residual realities of colonialism and those of the current neoliberal globalization paradigm.

Nevertheless, inherent in Agenda 2063, is its “call for action to all segments of African society to work together to build a prosperous and united Africa, as well as a ‘united, strong, sovereign, independent and self-reliant continent’” (Africa Union 2013). As such, the framers of Agenda 2063 place emphasis on empowering Africans in the social, economic and political decision-making process. Therefore, I intend to use the platform of Agenda 2063 to articulate a rethinking of the way we do education in SSA. It is my hope that this vision of education will play an integral part of the upcoming future debate on the way forward for addressing the poverty and underdevelopment challenges that faces our continent.

In theorizing on possible answers to my research question in accordance with the perspectives of Freire, Kellner and Giroux, I engage in a series of interrogations:

- What are the roles & functions of education within SSA?
- How to reconcile the roles and function of education within the context of SSA to Agenda 2063.
  - What kind of citizens does SSA aim to develop to ensure the realization of Agenda 2063?
- Logistics of Implementation:

- What previous reforms have been undertaken and what were the results of these reforms?
- How can the present system be reengineered to create this potential new kind of mindset in Sub Saharan Africans?
- Where within the education structure can this vision be implemented – in the formal or informal sections? Given the mindset that pervades the SSA elite class, in the formal system the most appropriate forum to articulate change?
- At what level or levels of education can such a system be implemented – primary, secondary, higher education and community and social levels?

These are the pertinent questions and challenges at the forefront as I examine the literature in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation. These analyses will include an examination of the methods of traditional indigenous knowledge transfer or the education system during precolonial SSA. Also, the reality of globalization dictates the interactions of cultures at the global level, and in this new global village (Abushouk, 2006) the interconnection and intertwining between peoples have become the inevitable reality. As such, I think it necessary to examine how other nations are engaging and incorporating critical thinking within their education systems in order to shed light on the success stories to adopt and the pitfalls to avoid in doing the same in SSA. Furthermore, even within the confines of the imperial project, I contend that there might be ways to use aspects of the imperial education system to salvage pertinent ‘cultural relevant’ aspects

(Ladson- Billings, 1994) beneficial for SSA. These analyses can open up potential avenues within the global arena in terms of partnerships and new configurations of thinking that can emerge to enact change within the education systems of SSA.

My articulations so far in this dissertation do not indicate a solitary effort. As I have indicated previously, there have been proponents of the call I make since the dawn of independence. For example, some first-generation post-independence leaders of SSA, notably Presidents Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Samora Machel (Mozambique) as well as Prime Minister Modibo Keita of Mali, were also articulate and prominent theorist on education. In the immediate post-colonial era, education for these African pioneers was not merely for consumption purposes, it was rather a primary factor to achieve meaningful independence from imperial control. Furthermore, Africans must rely on themselves to achieve liberation and to develop their region. To this end, they argued against the complete application of colonial models of education. Instead, educational experience itself must not only reflect the values and strengths of African ways of knowing but must also be flexible to incorporate new ideas that are consistent with the goals of complete independence and nation building. I will also tap into “funds of knowledge” from these pioneering critical theorists of education from SSA.

Undoubtedly, scholars asking for changes within the education system are still in the minority. Most likely this accounts for the absence of substantive change to pedagogy or curriculum within the formal education system. School curricula for example still maintain minimal connections to the everyday lives of SSA people and as such are still rooted in and thus reify the imperial paradigm. Several scholars whose works appear after

the aforementioned first generation of education theorists, such as Kofi, (1964); Mazrui, (1978); Jaguash, (2001); Kanu, (2007); Omolewa, (2007); Shizha, (2013); Njoki et al, (2015), continue to articulate this point, of the need to align education with the goal of improving the dismal realities of life in SSA. My dissertation adds to, and lends support, to these voices that calls for change.

### **Critical Reflection and Positionality**

As human beings, we cannot be neutral. The people we are and the values we embody travel with us in all aspects of our relationships, and these relationships in turn reshape who we are. Glesne (2010), confirms that “we never enter into research as a ‘blank slate,’ but rather carry with us guiding theories and assumptions, even if not conscious of them” (p. 31). That is, we have embedded within us our particularities, which in turn results in our research efforts always being, at least in some ways, political acts. Bettez (2014) describes positionality of a researcher, as a “combination of social status groups to which one belongs, (such as race, class, gender, and sexuality) and one’s personal experience (understanding that experience is always individually interpreted, and it is the interpretation that gives an experience meaning)” (p. 3).

Given the reality of extreme poverty for a large majority of Africans, I enter this study fully aware of, and acknowledge my place of privilege as a woman and a citizen of the West African nation of Sierra Leone. I spent my formative years in that country and still maintain close ties, even though I currently reside in the United States. I claim my place of privilege because of my immediate family’s connection with the elite class in Sierra Leone and because of the opportunity I have had to reside overseas. Living abroad

for a majority of Sierra Leoneans is the ultimate privilege, given the realities they would encounter in their country of birth if this opportunity were not available for them.

Nevertheless, I have always been sensitized to the realities of poverty and underdevelopment, in part as a result of my familial interactions and social relationships. I interact regularly with close members of my family as well as close and wider circles of friends and acquaintances who experience poverty at varying degrees. As such, even from my place of privilege within Sierra Leone, I have always been not only well acquainted and deeply familiar with the realities of poverty and underdevelopment, but also aware of the challenges within the education system to address the resulting and pressing issues inherent in these phenomena. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I was fortunate to finish the latter part of my secondary school education and to attend university in the United Kingdom. The disconnection between my life overseas and the poverty I witnessed alongside wealth on my visits to Sierra Leone further heightened my awareness socioeconomic of disparities and the realities of those my fellow citizens. The story I relate in the opening paragraphs of this dissertation testifies to this fact. As a result of these personal experiences, my place of privilege has not resulted in what Johnson (2006) characterizes as “the luxury of obliviousness.” Rather, it spurs me to seek to understand the deep-rooted causes of despair that I must contend with each time I am in Sierra Leone in order to find avenues for redress. Therefore, given this apolitical nature of education and research as explained by Greene and Bettez above, I am approaching my analysis of poverty and underdevelopment from a critical perspective.

This perspective critiques the more traditional literature in which scholars argue that the various manifestations of the imperial project was and continues to be for the good and well-being of Africans. In the post-colonial era, SSA is now fully integrated into the capitalist system of the new international world order. Within this geopolitical space, under the steering ship of organizations such as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), neoliberalism has been instituted as the preferred ideology for economic, political and sociocultural interactions (Biebricher & Johnson, 2012). Scholars representing the WB and IMF viewpoints argue that injecting neoliberal policies within all areas of SSA including in the domain of education is a viable option to promote economic growth and thereby reduce SSA's challenges with poverty and underdevelopment.

However, I am adopting a more critical approach to explore poverty and underdevelopment, and the possibilities of education to speak back to these issues. As such, I ground my examination in the arguments and explanations of Western critical theorists such as Freire, Dewey, Giroux and Kellner. I also privilege as much as possible, but to a lesser extent scholarship emanating from African critical theorists. These include Presidents Kwame Nkrumah (Ghana), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Samora Machel (Mozambique) as well as Prime Minister Modibo Keita of Mali.

### **Background Context**

In this section, I provide a brief background to the progression of poverty, underdevelopment and education in SSA in order to highlight the significance as well as the importance of my dissertation research. According to Tuchman (1994) "any social

phenomenon must be understood in its historical context” (p. 307). Such an understanding is vital to not only understand the present of a social reality, but also to clarify its evolution. In this way, I aim to provide a foundation for understanding the structures that uphold poverty, underdevelopment as well the models of education in SSA and to posit possibilities for responding to the resultant challenges these circumstances and systems pose.

### **Conceptualizing Sub Saharan Africa**

Pre-colonial SSA comprised of a tapestry of communities united by for example ties of tribal relationships, language and religious affiliation. According to scholars of pre-colonial Africa (Collins, 2006; Parker & Rathbone, 2007; Mimiko, 2010), the continent during this epoch included equally diverse organic political structures. These included historical kingdoms with advanced centralized or decentralized state structures based on strong democratic foundations of consensual rule, whilst others were stateless. However, these formations were sometimes subject to renegotiations as pre-colonial Africans were actively engaged in wars and conflict which “continually served to define societies, shape communities, mould identity, build (and destroy) states, effect economic and social and political change” (Reid, 2007, p. 2). The quest for political, economic and control of resources (such as access to pasture, water and arable land) in a hostile environment resulted in frequent and sometimes prolonged inter and intra conflicts and wars (Thobhani, 1998). Through conquest a tribe expands its territory, increases its tax and labour base as new members are absorbed in its folds, sometimes as inferior subjects.

However, even in the midst of conflict, pre-colonial communities according Kane (2016), were sometimes able to transcend parochial differences and establish codes of conduct with other tribes and communities. Nevertheless, Imperial powers not only coopted traditional governance structures, but also exploited these fragile social systems as they sought to control the hinterlands. They also instituted formal and well-defined territorial borders altering the dynamics especially in areas which had once been porous.

The unraveling of European empires in the aftermath of WWII precipitated the era of decolonization and eventual independence for nations within SSA. These nation states emerged out of the colonially administered territories, which were carved as a consequence of the Berlin Conference of 1844 that formalized the scramble for Africa, without regard to the nascent nations or political formations in those territories<sup>4</sup>. As such post-colonial SSA is comprised of significant sociocultural, economic, political and ecological diversity.

From a political distinction, SSA according to the Library of Congress includes all the 54 nations, including the six island nations, which are either fully or partially situated south of the Sahara (See Fig. 1). This region is also known as Black Africa, in reference to its predominantly black populations (Princeton, 2014). Nevertheless, I am aware of the complexity inherent in the corresponding use of the term SSA given the varied historicity, religious beliefs, sociocultural and linguistic diversity that is present in

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<sup>4</sup>The "Scramble for Africa" denotes the invasion, occupation, division, colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers during the period of New Imperialism, between 1881 and 1914.



the area. For example, within its 54 nations, SSA is comprised of more than 3,000 ethnic groups and 2,000 languages. The former French Colony of Central African Republic with its over 80 ethnic groups, each having its own language is quite distinct from Botswana that is predominantly made up of one major ethnic group and was colonized by Britain. Likewise, Liberia and Ethiopia, two SSA nations with a much-nuanced experience of colonialism<sup>5</sup> have a distinct outlook from Namibia and Angola that fought wars of liberation to gain independence. The former British colony Ghana, the birth place of the anticolonial movement, is significantly distinct in its intellectual and economic trajectories than for example, Gambia or Sierra Leone, also former British colonies. Kenya, the archetype of free-marketism in Africa, is different from its neighbor Tanzania that has a strong Afro-socialism agenda. Finally, the former French colony of Mauritania with Arab influences and a mainly Muslim population stands in stark contrast to landlocked Lesotho a former British colony where Christianity is the dominant religion.

However, the peoples of SSA are united by their collective and shared historicity, characterized by the experiences of imperialism in the guise of the transatlantic slave trade, colonization and neo-colonization. These structures have resulted in the experiences of poverty and underdevelopment for a significant margin of the inhabitants of the region. I maintain that black Africans internalize and manifest the residual consequences of imperialism in varied manners. It is this collective experience that I wish to interrogate. Consequently, I am not particularly interested in, for example, linguistic or

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<sup>5</sup>Ethiopia had resisted Italian colonization attempts. The United States established Liberia as a colony for freed slaves as a viable option to solve its 'negro problem'.

cultural diversity. However, I will address these to the extent that attention to them becomes necessary within the dissertation. My choice of such an approach is consistent with the methodology of scholars such as Spivak (1988), a member of the group of academics commonly referred to as the *Subaltern Studies* Collective (SSC) who named this subordination of differences so as to highlight common and shared essential features or characteristics amongst a group as strategic essentialism.

### **Strategic Essentialism**

The SSC's main goal was deconstructing colonial history, society and culture in India from the perspective of the subaltern or the non-elites. By focusing on the subaltern's perspective, it became useful to adopt the essentialism stance. Essentialism "presupposes that a group or a category of objects/people share some defining features exclusive to the members of this particular group or category" (Eide 2010, p. 67). Spivak furthers that the adoption of essentialism to further the goals of the SSC must be considered legitimate as it represents "a *strategic* use of positive essentialism in a scrupulously viable political interest" (p. 13). In other words, one can engage in the "theoretical impure" practice of essentialism as a practical political expediency to further the objectives of a group.

Undeniably, the countries or peoples of SSA are diverse. Nevertheless, the origins of the structures that uphold poverty and underdevelopment, as well as their experiences and interactions are similar. For example, people throughout SSA lack access to health care and other basic needs as a result of these unfavourable circumstances. These shared political and economic realities in SSA demand a collective approach and as such

becomes politically expedient to generalize the region's experience in order to emphasize a shared and severe plight that demands attention from Africans themselves as well as those in the international community.

Quite apart from the unifying historical experience, SSA countries share certain customs and values that justify their treatment as a block in spite of the stated diversity. The claim of the African-ness of a custom, belief or value need not entail the exclusivist claim that distinguishes it as uniquely African. I agree with Metz (2013) that this only needs to mean that such a custom, belief or value is present in SSA to a noticeable extent, relative to other geographical locations. The case for the legitimacy of the claim of African-ness, of an African Personality, of the common features of African life, has been sufficiently argued by African philosophers (Nkrumah 1970; Diop 1987; Gyekye 1995; Ramose 2002). Recently, Ajei (2015) has distilled these arguments for the legitimacy in accepting the African-ness of an idea or a problem. It is sufficient at this point to state my acceptance of the validity of these arguments, and to assert the presence of sufficient similarity in the African historical and cultural experience that can provide a unity of approach to education policy which, when formulated, can be implemented universally in SSA.

Thus, I am engaged strategically, according to Spivak, in “positivist essentialism” in my use of the term SSA to denote a collective and shared history of imperialism in order to “scrupulously advocate for a political interest” which is to interrogate the experiences and interactions with the structures that uphold poverty and underdevelopment in the region in order to advocate changes to this status quo.

## **Immediate Post-colonial SSA**

At the dawn of independence, during the inaugural conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the first generation SSA leadership submitted proposals that sought to define the future of the continent. These proposals unanimously articulated the vision of complete political and economic independence from former colonial powers. However, the forces opposed to this new way forward were and continue to remain significant; and have held hostage the paths of progress defined by these early leaders. From the onset of the history of SSA nation statehood, violence and its concomitant economic, social and political instability have been endemic. For example, within one year of independence there was the first successful military coup in 1963 against President Olympio of Togo, which had been granted independence from France in 1961. The assassination of President Olympio in retrospect set a foreboding trajectory for SSA.

In what is commonly referred to as the multipronged “tragedy” of SSA (Lumumba, 2015), successive SSA leaders have abandoned the clear vision set forth by their predecessors; and instead pursue policies that have failed to deliver on the independence promise of complete political and economic freedom from former colonial masters. At the same time however, succeeding generations of Africans are seemingly incapable of effectively interrogating these leaders for reneging on the independence promises. Therefore, since independence, as Lloyd (2010) and Di John, (2010) attest, SSA has been plagued with military and civilian dictatorships; corruption; violent conflicts; genocide as a consequence of intra, as well as interstate, wars; and stagnant economies, leading to chronic and persistent poverty and its counterpart -

underdevelopment. In particular, this lack of visionary leadership on the SSA political landscape has resulted in the failure to enact policies that will allow the continent to partake in defining, and profiting from, constructive tenets of the unfolding era of globalization.

### **The ‘Resource Curse’**

These troubling circumstances of poverty and underdevelopment can scarcely be understood in this part of the world with its documented evidence of immense natural, financial and human resources. In terms of natural resources, Africa counts among the world’s richest continents. Williams (1997) estimates that the continent produces 50% of the world’s gold from South Africa, Ghana, Mali and Tanzania. Most of the world’s diamonds are from Botswana, Congo DRC, South Africa and Angola. 75% of Chromium is from South Africa. 90% of the world’s cobalt comes from Congo DRC, Zambia, South Africa, Zimbabwe; and the continent harbors 40% of the world’s potential hydro-electric power. 20 % of Bauxite is from Guinea, Ghana and Sierra Leone. The continent contains 65% of global manganese deposits in South Africa, Gabon, Ghana, Ivory Coast & Namibia. SSA nations such as Nigeria, Angola, South Sudan, DRC, Guinea Bissau, Ghana and Gabon are also significant players in the global production of crude oil as well as DRC, Zambia and South Africa which also produces copper. Also, several other mineral resources that are required to sustain contemporary technological advances emanate from SSA. In addition, to these mineral resources is Africa’s agricultural diversity that comprises food and cash crops like cocoa, tea, coffee, cotton, and vegetable oil; as well as millions of acres of tilled and untilled tracts of land (Onimode, 1998). In

addition to these is the advantage of a young and diverse population base. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2013), more than half of SSA's population aged below 25 years augurs well for its human resource development.

However, the extraction of these resources continues to exert negative impact on the people of SSA rather than benefit them. Sachs & Warner (1995) have coined the term "resource curse" to explain this paradox. According to Brass (2008), resource curse is prevalent in countries "that possess abundant extractable natural resources, become 'cursed' by these resources and suffer a number of negative economic, social and political consequences, especially if the resources are discovered while the country's economy is undeveloped" (p. 527).

Indeed, all economic datasets and life style indicators reflect these negative economic social and political conditions in SSA as an underdeveloped region. There are issues with food insecurity in some parts of the continent, induced by a failure to implement measures to adapt to climate change (drought). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2010) estimates that close to 240 million people in SSA, or one person in four, lacks adequate food for a healthy and active life. Also, thirty-six out of fifty-seven countries identified by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) are lacking sufficient numbers of healthcare workers to meet the minimum threshold density ration of 2.3 doctors, nurses, and midwives per 1,000 people needed to adequately cover the population with essential health services in SSA. In light of these challenges, health systems are failing, and there are high infant and maternal mortality rates, increasing HIV rates, and the alarming frequency of preventable diseases such as cholera and malaria.

Further still, SSA economies experience low GDP growth rates, and this reflects in the poor ranking of these countries on both the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). In fact, 34 out of 54 countries that are classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are in SSA. Furthermore, 33 out of the 36 Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s, eligible for special assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral financial organizations are in SSA (IMF, 2017a). As such, these countries are unable to support their national budget projections, and still depend on foreign aid and loans from former colonial powers and other international donors to subsidize basic internal services for its citizens. According to The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2014), the total Official Development Assistance (ODA) disbursement to SSA by the top ten donors totaled \$56 billion in 2013, whilst the total ODA from all donors was \$1352.2 billion in 2014.

The many Agricultural and Technology Universities such as the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and The Juba Valley Agricultural Institute in Somalia, as well as agricultural research institutes, for example the Forum for Agricultural Research (FARA) and The Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) with active centers in many countries of SSA, have still not resolved the region's food security issues. Likewise, medical universities in SSA that train cadres of medical personnel such as the Institut Supérieur des Sciences de la Santé in Burkina Faso as well as the College of Medicine in Nigeria's University of Ibadan have not significantly resulted in the region being effectively able to institute adequate

infrastructure to grapple with the chronic health problems in their countries. These representations are typical of all SSA countries.

Furthermore, rather than designing and developing systems and institutions that are organic to SSA, intellectual output in the region continues to rely on colonial and or neocolonial paradigms. Even though the decades since independence have clearly demonstrated that many of the neocolonial models of socioeconomic and political governance are ineffective in the context of the lives and aspirations of the majority of SSA population, and are of continued detriment to many, the tendency remains for framers of policy to revert to default colonial positions. For example, former British colonies still use the British education system whilst the French legal system is alive and well in former Francophone colonies.

All these indications of SSA's socioeconomic retrogression may be tracked from ill-conceived and misapplied goals and strategies of education. These indications are also inducing a sense of restlessness amongst its peoples. SSA residents are willing and ready to emigrate from their homeland in search of better opportunities and living conditions. A joint report by the UN & OECD (2013) found that 2.9 million or one in nine SSA citizens were working in other countries, especially in Europe and North America. Yet still, many more of the region's young population risks their lives on the waters of the Mediterranean as they attempt to flee their impoverished or war-ravaged countries. Their plight intermittently plays out in the media when the decrepit vessels they are travelling on capsize. These tragedies have prompted the Maltese Prime Minister to warn that the Mediterranean is fast becoming "a cemetery" for desperate migrants (BBC, 2014).



Some scholars including Banjaree & Linstead (2001) and Ibrahim (2013) identify the policies and practices inherent in the imperial structures and the corresponding political, economic and socio-cultural mechanism inherent in colonialism, the cold war, decolonization agreements and neoliberal globalization as the root causes of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Although I will further develop the concepts by the authors cited earlier in this paragraph, and how they practically manifest in succeeding chapters of this dissertation, I summarize them here for the purpose of clarity.

### **The Structures of Imperialism**

#### **Colonialism**

I perceive colonialism from the perspective of wa Thiong'o (1988), as a practice of cultural, social, political, and economic domination, which involves the subjugation and exploitation exerted by one people who consider themselves as superior, on another, which this 'superior' group considers inferior. Colonialism involved a multi-pronged approach, including the spread of one's allegedly superior culture through the inculcation of racist and essentialist views. However, the predominant doctrine of colonialism remains that of mercantilism. In other words, under the guise of "civilizing missions" (Hall, 2008) to intellectually rescue those deemed as inferior races, colonialism was essentially driven by the competitive drive amongst the colonial powers in their perpetual search, acquisition and consolidation of unjustly captured resources including land, slaves, raw materials and consumers.

Nevertheless, as discourses are always concurrent, economic agendas have repercussions on political and socio-cultural spheres. That is, even though colonization

was primarily an economic and commercial project, it produced significant and sustained implications and consequences on the political and sociocultural arenas. This is because the economic sphere is intricately interwoven with the political and sociocultural spheres. For example, as colonial powers established economic dominance over their conquered territories, laws and edicts were enacted by the various colonial administrations that directly impacted the political, social and cultural lives of the indigenes.

### **Neocolonialism**

The postcolonial era does not signify a rupture with economic, political and social control structures that were inherent during colonialism. Rather, a term such as neocolonialism, which was coined by (Nkrumah, 1965), became synonymous with continued and sustained control by former colonial powers on the affairs of new postcolonial states (Trivedi, 2008; Nederveen Pieterse, 2009). Indeed, the residual consequences of the policies and practices inherent in decolonization agreements, the cold war and contemporary neoliberal globalization continue to uphold neocolonialism and hence prolong the poverty and underdevelopment experience in the region.

**Decolonization agreements.** These were the parameters agreed upon between colonial powers and their former subjects that aimed to usher in the postcolonial era by conferring sovereignty to newly independent nations. However, the real intention of these agreements on the part of the colonial powers was to preserve the existing balance of power, which was tilted in their favor.

**The cold war.** This was the post WW2 relationship that developed between the capitalist system of the US, the communist Soviet Union and their respective allies. The

Cold War dominated international affairs for decades and was characterized by the struggle for supremacy between the two superpowers. Although the two sides never engaged in direct confrontation with each other, there were many proxy wars within SSA that they covertly or overtly supported as each power sought to achieve their national interests.

**Neoliberalism.** As an economic policy, neoliberalism emphasizes the efficiency and superiority of the market or a laissez faire market approach implemented through the process of privatization, liberalization and deregulation. Furthermore, other areas of human interactions, for example, political, socio-cultural, ecological are subjected to the propagation of this economic ideology (Biebricher & Johnson, 2012; Bowles, 2005). Globalization became the conduit for institutionalizing the neoliberal agenda as an international economic policy; leading to the current reality of neoliberal globalization. Sniegocki, (2008) describes this fusion of globalization and neoliberal economic agendas as “the worldwide spread of an economic model emphasizing ‘free markets’ and ‘free trade’” (p. 322).

Within SSA, the debt crisis, which debuted in the early eighties, was the avenue for neoliberal globalization to become the defacto economic hegemonic paradigm. According to Baab (2013), Gay (2007), Hall (2011), Hursh and Henderson (2011), and Bond (2006), through 'official' lines of credit from International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), newly independent SSA nations were granted aid packages for economic development. These packages came in the form of loans and grants that were used for capital investments and

other technical support. The natural resources of SSA were used to guarantee these huge loan amounts. The global economic crisis in the late 1970s, particularly the rise in interest rates, became major impediments in SSA's capacity to meet its existing loan repayments, hence the Debt Crisis.

Since the onset of the crisis, the role of the IFIs has been transformed. In particular, the IMF and WB have been commissioned and dispatched to the debtor nations within SSA to supervise economic policy and credits to the third world. In this capacity, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were instituted. The main thrust of SAPs was "the World Bank and IMF delivered loans conditional on the adoption of prescribed policies" (Gay, 2007, p. 85). Consequently, SSA nations were forced to adopt free market neoliberal policies as conditions for aid, loans and grants from IFIs and other donor countries and agencies.

In 2001 the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) were added to the SAPs. The MDG is the policy objective between the IFIs and SSA as part of the international development efforts to eradicate poverty by 2015. Each country as fulfillment of the MDG had to submit Poverty Reduction Papers (PRPs). The PRPs were meant to function in a dual role as a generator of economic growth and reduction of poverty. Although it is widely acknowledged in scholarly writings (Satterthwaite, 2003; Easterly, 2008; Anger, 2010), that SSA will not meet any of the MDG goals, it is nevertheless a recognition on the part of the international community that since implementation of SAP, each SSA nation state that signed a "standard policy package" with the IFIs is currently in the state

of socioeconomic retrogression (Loxley, 1990; Kingston et al, 2011), given the blatant evidence of the high levels of poverty and underdevelopment within the region.

### **Education as a Socio-Cultural Mechanism**

Colonial and postcolonial structures in SSA have all used education as a means to reorient local knowledge bases into one that is conducive to the viewpoint of the dominant structure. Colonial education was intended for the formation of what Hall (2008) refers to as “colonial subjects.” This process was multidimensional – from the quintessential ‘civilizing mission’ of instilling Western values through proselytizing with the goal of developing particular skills so individuals could meet the required human resources needs, which included training and adapting of labor to gain access to resources that will serve the colonial and imperial ambitions (Kanu, 2007; Gbikpi-Benissan, 2011). Similarly, the trending neoliberal agenda for education is based on education reform that is standards-based and heavily centered on a market-oriented curriculum approach, with the ultimate goal of preparing workers and consumers (Fischman & Haas, 2009).

Immediate post-colonial SSA government also recognized the primacy of the socio-cultural aspects of education and thereby attempted to establish education systems that were firmly grounded within the African sociocultural contexts as pathways to achieve a veritable independence and sustainable development (Kassam, 1994). However, these first attempts at reforms were stalled as the shackles of imperialism did not terminate at independence. European colonialists on their part were not interested in improving the infrastructure of their colonies and so did not invest in any social or development programs. As such, educational infrastructures within SSA were not

particularly developed. Thus, independence and the subsequent onset of the debt crisis negatively impacted the education sector, resulting in severe budget cuts due to the repayment conditionalities of the debt. For example, according to Geo-Jaga (2004), Nigeria's education budget sharply declined from 24.7% in 1981 to 9.6% in 1982. In Senegal, teacher training was drastically reduced from four years to six months as a direct result of the cut on social services (Duthilleul, 2004).

All these conditions continue to result in a gradual but sustained dilapidated education system both in terms of access and substance. Consequently, the lofty post-colonial dreams for education was itself stillborn and individual SSA nation states had to revert to former colonial models which are still in place across present day SSA. Although there exist spaces of possibilities within communities, local and international organizations, and some within academia in their attempts to bring alternative and critical approaches to education, these attempts are in the minority and can be considered marginalized. Ultimately, the challenge faced in SSA is that the current manifestation of imperial education conceptualizes development and progress only through the logic of the maximization of profit, and the free market, not in human socio-economic developmental terms.

### **Significance of the Study**

My study of the relationship between poverty, under-development and education within SSA from critical and postcolonial theory perspectives is significant for a number of reasons. First, SSA as a region is facing marginalization at various levels in this era of

neoliberal globalization. Luis (2006) highlights this marginalization in his warning that SSA has become a footnote on academic pages. Luis's claims further that

mainstream journals and conferences in economics seldom feature papers on African issues. Departments of African Studies at First World universities are also facing increasing marginalization and cutbacks; even within the sub discipline of development economics, which has poverty and inequality as its focus, SSA is facing marginalization. (p. 638).

Consequently, this dissertation is my contribution to considerations of how an examination of the causes of poverty, underdevelopment and marginalization of SSA from critical and postcolonial theory perspectives might bring to the fore the plight of people SSA in new light and generate insights for policy that, if implemented, could initiate a reversal of this trend.

Second, existing bodies of literature relating to this topic are from varied but narrow perspectives. I will explore in depth some of the existing research in the respective conceptual chapters. However, in order to illustrate the significance and relevance of my study as distinct from the current literature, it is necessary at this point to provide a brief overview of the related scholarship. Scholars such as Takeuchi and Angina (2011) and Schneider and Nega (2013) discuss the current realities of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Others focus on the relationships between poverty, underdevelopment and neoliberal globalization (Esidene & Yatu 2012; Kihika 2009; Riddell, 1992). The discussions of these scholarly are very important and pertinent to highlighting vivid realities of poverty and underdevelopment, as well as the linkages of these to neoliberal globalization.

Also, a significant amount of available literature mostly focuses on SSA's economic and financial relationships with IFIs, such as the IMF (2017b), the WB and the UN: the donor and aid institutions. These studies are predominantly focused on the economic and policy aspects of development from the perspective of these institutions. As such, they generally examine the cost effectiveness of these institutions' 'investments' in various projects that are being enacted and or implemented on the continent in order to enhance the financial standing of these countries or induce further policy changes (Klasen & Blades, 2013). The wider impacts on, for example, the human socio-economic development of the populations that these 'investments' are meant to benefit are not equally or fully explored.

Furthermore, the dominant explanations of poverty and underdevelopment in most of these studies are focused as solely the result of domestic factors within individual African nations (Payne & Phillips, 2010; Pogge, 2001). Whilst I agree to a certain extent that domestic realities must be accounted for, this perception ignores the international context. By this I mean that SSA was integrated in the world economic system since the onset of the imperial encounter, and so therefore the role and various influences of the international system "which has received almost no attention in the mainstream development literature" (Dasandi, 2013, p. 2) must be acknowledged.

Hence, the unique aspect of my study in this regard is my attempt to offer a critical understanding of the multifaceted components that sustains poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Therefore, I endeavor in this dissertation to collate comprehensive rather than piecemeal (Amaizo, 2012) scholarly and documentary pieces



of evidence that presents an overall view of the structural, institutional and practices that contribute to these issues in SSA.

Thirdly, rarely do scholars writing about globalization address the role of education in speaking back to the challenges of this mode of imperialism. Even in the U.S. context, there has not been enough research on the relationships between education and imperial structures. This lack of critical input is akin to Hytten (2008) observation that “educators, including educational philosophers, have not spent enough time thinking about the challenges and possibilities of globalization” (p. 334).

Specifically, few scholars have applied critical theories to the SSA context. A significant segment of scholarship addresses the limitations of imperial education as implemented in particular countries, but not within a comprehensive framework for resolving the lack of critical input by students and teachers alike. Neither do much of these studies address the possibilities of education in terms of critical curriculum enhancement with the ultimate aim of addressing poverty and underdevelopment within SSA (Weber, 2008; Alderuccio, 2010; Bleck & Guindo, 2013). Even within the framework of Agenda 2063, critical language does not seem prominent in the plan’s attempt to pave the future of education in SSA. Rather, scholarly literature on the state of education in SSA is usually framed from a crisis perspective. This perspective highlights such things as the problem of access to education, the inefficiencies inherent in the education systems, and the lack of tools to adequately measure learning competencies and benchmark education standards (Lewin, 2009; Setswe, 2013).

These dominant discourses on education sidelines possibilities of inserting critical perspectives to educational praxis (Woolman, 2001) that can facilitate an understanding on the part of Africans to grapple with issues deeply connected to their lives. As such this study is unique in its appropriation of critical and post-colonial theoretical perspectives for analysis of poverty and underdevelopment and its parallel call for a corresponding critical mode of education that can potential disrupt hegemonic practices in favor of instituting social justice and a democratic culture in SSA. Thus, my application of the aforementioned critical paradigms to bear on the relationship between poverty, underdevelopment and education within SSA underlies my intention to prompt expanded ways of understanding these issues. Adopting this methodological approach offers opportunities to gain a better understanding of not only the assumptions that undergird current conversations, but also the opportunity to analyze the deeper and hidden contexts that surrounds the mindsets that produce and sustain poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.

Lastly, the effects of poverty and underdevelopment are socio-economic realities shrouded in political and economic hegemonic discourse. Unfettered capitalism is producing what Chris Hedges in Bill Moyers (2012) describes as “capitalist sacrifice zones,” that is, neglected communities that are trapped in endless cycles of poverty, powerlessness, and despair. These endemic poverty and underdevelopment challenges within SSA preclude meaningful debate and progressive actions especially on specific segments and sub segments within the general population, thereby prolonging their disenfranchisement. For example, gender disparity in education persists in part due to the

reality that if destitute families have to make choices among which of their children to educate, parents are likely to give precedence to investing in boys' education over girls. This is because males are perceived to have lifelong commitment to the family unit, while a daughter's education brings a lesser value to the household, especially after marriage when the benefit of her education is reaped by her new family (Johannes, 2010; Nkohoma, 2011; Ombati, V.et al 2012). As such, women continue to experience generational cycles of poverty and marginalization.

The lack of development and access to basic resources for subsistence and well-being such as food, health, employment and education in SSA negates human dignity as enshrined in UN Charter of Human Rights. Several conflicts that have occurred in SSA are in part fueled by competition to access these basic resources. The failure of SSA nations to provide basic infrastructural necessities for its citizens characterizes them as failed states. Indeed, the Foreign Policy and Fund for Peace (2013) reported that the most unsustainable countries in world are concentrated in SSA. Residual consequences of the conflicts that are arising as a result of the realities inherent in failed states are increasingly being exported outside the boundaries of SSA and if not addressed, have the potential to further threaten global stability.

This dissertation is therefore significant, given my goal of contributing new critical lenses to pressing issues that are prevalent within SSA so that ordinary people, and those in leadership and policy making roles, as well as people within the broader international community, are able to engage within these fresh perspectives to work towards a different future for the SSA region.

## **Organization of the Study**

I develop my argument about the value of a critical lens for understanding, and responding to, poverty and development challenge in SSA in six chapters. In this introductory chapter I have laid the foundation for the study. I have described the problem. Also, I have posed my research question, stated the purpose of my study, discussed issues related to language choice, and provided some brief background context. I have concluded the chapter by describing the significance of my study.

My dissertation is a non-empirical or conceptual study of how I apply broad literature to poverty and underdevelopment and the possibilities of education to address these issues. A conceptual study as described by Winstanley (2009) is “one long argument ... making references to the literature through [one’s] argument” (p. 53) in order to offer a research-based argument. As such, I organize a six-chapter dissertation with this section serving as the first chapter.

In chapter two, I examine the imperial project and its current structures of neoliberal globalization; its precursor colonialism; the cold war and decolonization agreements. I also discuss the political and economic mechanisms within which the structures of imperialism are implemented. I offer a fuller definition of these terms, particularly how I use these concepts within the context of my dissertation. In doing these, I distinguish between globalization and neoliberal globalization, highlighting the negatives and positives. I contend that framing my argument from this perspective enables me to discuss not only the challenges of neoliberal globalization within the SSA context, but also the positive aspects of globalization. These analyses can open up

potential avenues within the global arena in terms of partnerships that can be established to enact change, particularly within the education systems of SSA. In the third chapter, I deliberate on the evolution of education in SSA, from pre-colonial, colonial to the post-colonial era. The goal here is to examine the historical and contemporary contexts in order to highlight and make connections between imperial education and the manner in which it directly or indirectly impacts and contributes to socio-economic regression in SSA. I specifically include an analysis of the pre-colonial era with the view to examining whether, and if so what, perspectives traditional indigenous educational paradigms might offer to a reconceptualization of the nature and value of education in SSA.

In chapter four, I continue to examine imperialism and its relationship to poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. In this chapter, I analyze the legacies of political, and economic mechanism discussed in chapter 2, and of education as a social mechanism of the imperial project, which I discuss in chapter 3. My aim is to thread the connections through examples of countries within SSA and establish how these phenomena continue to directly impact poverty and underdevelopment within SSA. In the fifth chapter, I apply the critical lens that I develop in the preceding chapters to the imperial project. My intent in this chapter is to reframe imperialism through critical perspectives. I give overviews of critical theory, critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory, the critical paradigms to further my analysis. I analyze not only the structures and mechanism of the imperial project, but also a critical perspective of Africans' responses to these policies and practices. That is, how the people of SSA resist, become active, passive and coopted players vis a vis the imperial project. I emphasize the relationships between power and knowledge, social and

cultural reproductions, stereotypes and prejudice. I maintain that the systemic frameworks implemented to ensure the goals and aims of imperialism and the resulting internalization by citizens of SSA of these frameworks have resulted in their operative concepts becoming major hindrances to productive education paradigms in SSA in spite of several attempts at reforms.

Critical theory and post-colonial theory seek to examine and understand the wider and hidden context of issues in the social world. Consistent with these inherent foundations, I concentrate on questions relating to not only how the global systems operate, but also the roles that the people of SSA play either as supporters, antagonists, or the adoption of a neutral stance in order to sustain the structures of power, privilege, hegemony and superiority. These frameworks of global interactions, as well as the roles SSAs themselves assume conversely guarantee the realities of oppression, exploitation, inferiority and subalternity for the marginalized populations of SSA.

Ultimately, critical theories dictate the reconstruction of phenomenon after deconstruction. As such, in the sixth and concluding chapter, I attempt to put forth an ideal vision of critical education that can potentially address the structural foundations of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. In this chapter, I also discuss the limitations of this new potential paradigm given the pervasive reach of the current manifestation of imperialism - neoliberal globalization as well as put forth suggestions for further research on the topics. Thus, my vision of an education paradigm in SSA is grounded in elements of the language of critical education theory and components of postcolonial theory, together with relevant structures of pre-colonial indigenous education. Although critical

pedagogy and post-colonial theory continue to be modified and are now widely used within the western academic framework, they have origins in securing the interests of marginalized and exploited communities in non-western environments. As such, it is apparent that opportunities exist for their further re-conceptualization or re-imagination that for use specifically within the SSA context.

## CHAPTER II

### BACKGROUND CONTEXT: POVERTY, UNDERDEVELOPMENT, AND THE IMPERIAL PROJECT IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

#### **Introduction**

Even though the economic records of Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) remain diverse and distinct, scholars familiar with this aspect of the region uniformly characterize the overall postcolonial economic situation in SSA by the realities of endemic poverty and underdevelopment. In other words, poverty and underdevelopment are shared national experiences that spanned the colonial era and continue to plague postcolonial SSA. These lived realities are contradictory phenomena in the continent given the presence of an overabundance of natural resources combined with human capacity and potential to improve the fortunes of the region. (Takeuchi & Aginam, 2011).

In this dissertation, I am critically analyzing literature that examines historical and contemporary factors that uphold such levels of poverty and underdevelopment within SSA with the ultimate aim of conceptually reimagining the possibilities of a vision of education in SSA that will address these challenges. As such, I am arguing that the ideological concept of imperialism is the major contributory factor to poverty and underdevelopment regression in SSA. That is, although all SSA nations either through peaceful transfers or wars of independence were granted freedom from colonial rule, imperial powers however continue to manipulate the political, economic and sociocultural trajectories of these SSA nations. This hegemonic influence flourishes



through neocolonial structures (comprising of decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization) and corresponding political, economic and sociocultural mechanisms. The goal is to guarantee access and control of resources in SSA for the ultimate benefit of imperial powers; hence the endemic realities of poverty and underdevelopment crisis in the region. I name this prolonged continued imposition of imperialism as The Uninterrupted Imperial Project in SSA.

In this chapter, I embark on a discussion of the background of the phenomena that inform the research questions of this study. As mentioned in the previous chapter, prominent among these are decolonization agreements, the cold war, neoliberal globalization and their corresponding political, economic and sociocultural mechanisms. My attention to them in this chapter seeks to highlight their relationships with poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. I divide this chapter into three sections. I first give a brief overview and highlight the relationship between poverty and underdevelopment, and their implications for SSA. I then proceed to analyze neocolonial structures and end the chapter with an examination of the economic and political mechanisms of the uninterrupted imperial project that uphold poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.

### **Poverty and Underdevelopment - Overview**

Poverty is characterized as a pervasive global pandemic that exists not only in the developing world, but also in developed nations. A concise definition of the terms ‘developing nation’ and ‘developed nation’ is lacking amongst not only the different agencies that make up the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), but also in academic discourses. However, for the purpose of this dissertation, a developed nation includes the

current 34 nations that make up the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – that is 15 to 20 percent of countries, whilst the rest of the world’s countries – 80 to 85 percent as non-OECD are considered part of the developing world (Nielsen, 2011).

Nevertheless, some segment of every country’s population, regardless of living in the developing or developed world, experience poverty. As such, each country has adopted particular ways of dealing with issues of poverty. For example, the US is fifty years into its ‘all-out war on human poverty and unemployment’ initiated by President Lyndon Johnson. This ‘war’ includes a set of social programs that are contested politically and subjected to ongoing debate whether they have any meaningful impact on poverty levels (Desilver, 2014).

According to World Bank (2010), nearly half of the world’s population — more than 3 billion people — lives on less than \$2.50 a day. These are those who live in poverty. More than 1.3 billion live in *extreme/absolute* poverty (less than \$1.25 a day) and are unable to meet their basic consumption requirements. In addition, The United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2009) estimates that over 1 billion children worldwide are living in poverty. Yet still, global poverty is not a homogenous phenomenon. It is experienced in different and distinctive manners in both the developed and developing world given that poverty is context specific, varying according to the level of development, social norms and values within countries and communities (Vidyasagar 2006).

Underdevelopment like poverty is present at the global level, but is mainly associated and experienced within the nations of the developing world.

Underdevelopment is a poignant manifestation of the presence of poverty. An underdeveloped nation according to Marcel (2013), Fernando (2011), Leibenstein (1957) and Todaro & Smith (2012) is one which, amongst other factors, has low standards of living; that is, its citizens live in absolute poverty, lack access to adequate health care and education and other basic infrastructural social services as represented in Figure 2.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, the issue of alleviating underdevelopment is directly concerned with the alleviation and eradication of poverty. Thus, in societies and communities plagued by poverty, the discourse on sustainable development becomes redundant if the leadership does not adequately address the problem of poverty.

All countries within SSA classified as developing nations experience poverty and, of course, underdevelopment at chronic levels. This poses the threat of a bleak future for the people of the continent in this era of globalization. According to Bhattacharyya (2009), Apodaca (2011), and Maile (2013), overall global poverty rates are on the decline. What this means is that the developed world has made remarkable progress in the eradication of poverty, but this progress does not reflect the case for the developing world, especially SSA, which is falling behind the rest of the world as can be deduced from the discussions above. Luis (2006) warns of the continent's technological, economic social, intellectual and political marginalization. In other words, as other areas of the

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<sup>6</sup>In Figure 2, I have represented the distinguishing elements of underdevelopment identified according to these scholars.

world are being increasingly integrated into the world economy, SSA consistently lags behind.

Nevertheless, these tangible and existential realities of prolonged poverty and underdevelopment in SSA are the result of the convergence of various historical and contemporary factors. These historical factors according to Illife, (1987) include a devastating and cruel global slave trade and long periods of colonial occupation. Further to these, a series of European-backed commercial ventures to exploit Africa's considerable natural wealth provided little institutional, infrastructural, and human capital when African countries began to achieve independence during the past century. Barrett et al (2006) identifies the cold war and post-cold war politics, prolonged conflicts, a series of structural adjustment experiments, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic as contemporary factors. Explaining and analyzing these identified factors of the Imperial Project will be the focus of the remaining sections of this chapter.

### **Neocolonial Structures of the Imperial Project**

In this section, I intend to present an analysis of the neocolonial structures which scholars such as Jalata (2013) and Irogbe (2005), identify as integral to upholding poverty and underdevelopment within the region of SSA. This includes the ideological concept of imperialism and its inherent practical manifestations in colonialism and neocolonialism. Neocolonialism in turn also materializes in the guise of the Cold War, decolonization agreements and neoliberal globalization. Therefore, in this section, I offer definitions of these terms as well as archival evidence and analysis to show how these manifest within the region of SSA.

## **The Uninterrupted Imperial Project in SSA**

The word imperialism has roots in the Latin *imperium*, signifying “rule over extensive, far-flung territories, far beyond the original ‘homeland’ of the rulers” (Howe, 2002, p. 13). The concept has undergone various re-formulizations during the course of history (Clayton, 1996; Kiely 2010). However, I use the contemporary or ‘new’ understanding<sup>7</sup> of the term that dates back from 1870 to present day. This new imperialism is characterized by the progression of direct conquest of territories and establishing formal colonies by imperial powers to the current day operations of multinational corporations, and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other entities operating in former colonies (Kiely 2010). Therefore, at the most fundamental level, imperialism as an ideology can be summarized as the political, economic and socio-cultural domination of a weaker nation or region (periphery) by a stronger and more powerful country or region (center) (Stone, 1987; Young, 2001). The imperatives for imperial adventures are varied and interrelated as I represent in Figure 3.

However, what is consistent in these competing doctrines of imperialism is that ‘center’ nations or regions in the throes of industrializing must seek new access to raw materials, as well as access to markets from other ‘peripheral’ nations or regions. Therefore, I agree with (Clayton, 1996; Goucher et al, 1998) that the need to ensure

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<sup>7</sup>The Old Imperialism occurred between 1500 and 1800. Through wars and conquests, Western Europeans established colonies in African coastal regions, but did not focus on acquiring physical control of territories.

continued access to resources and markets is the catalyst that facilitates the other reasons for imperialism to endure.

Economics	Political & Military	Science & Invention	Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to natural resources</li> <li>• Access to new markets</li> <li>• Place for growing populations to settle</li> <li>• Place to invest profits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bases for trade</li> <li>• Military Bases</li> <li>• Power and security for a global empire</li> <li>• Nationalism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New weapons</li> <li>• New Medicines</li> <li>• Improved ships</li> <li>• Communication networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civilization Mission of 'backward' societies through imposition of</li> <li>• Culture</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Politico-legal systems</li> <li>• General ways of knowing &amp; living</li> </ul>

Figure 3. Reasons for Imperialism

The process of acquiring, maintaining and expanding empire; or the practice of imperialism, can be formal, occurring through direct conquest and occupation of territories. It can also be informal, by exerting subtle and benign political and economic influences on weaker nations or regions. Formal forms of imperialism are exemplified by the system of colonialism, whilst informal imperialism manifests through the policies and practices of the Cold War, decolonization agreements and neoliberal globalization.

As I describe above, the concept of imperialism signifies the formal or informal exercise of economic and political power by rich and powerful nations over those that are weak. This definition is appropriate for characterizing the current relationship between SSA and colonial powers, including those in Western Europe, the US, for a brief time the former USSR and now China as it too moves outside of its national borders to seek resources and markets (Haag, 2011). SSA as a colonized region is enduring a

longstanding uninterrupted imperial conquest beginning with the period of old imperialism, through new imperialism in the guise of colonialism, the theater of the cold war, the imposition of decolonization agreements with colonial powers and now neoliberal globalization. All these factors are, in other words, inherent in my summation of the imperial project. Next, I examine the manifestations of these longstanding uninterrupted imperial relationships.

### **Colonialism/Colonization**

Prior to colonialism, Europeans and Africans had established relationships in a variety of settings for centuries. However, The Portuguese and Spanish were the pioneers of European expansion. Since the mid 1400's, the two royal dynasties assured in their religious convictions were granted papal endorsement to establish their official state ideologies in newly 'discovered' territories. These include exploration, proselytizing and monopolizing trade. These actions were usually accompanied through military force on the locals who refused particularly in agreeing to Portuguese and Spanish monopoly of trade (Boxer, 1961). Likewise, in the immediate post slave trade era, the British, buoyed by the successful role of the Evangelical movement in the slavery abolition movement, began to look to these new territories as avenues "to save the souls of the supposedly barbaric peoples of Africa and to bring the 'light of European civilization'" (Gifford, 2012, p. 165), mirroring the path of the Portuguese and Spanish before them.

These initial contacts with SSA were limited along the coastal regions as the 'Dark Continent' was perceived as a mystery to Europeans. Its vast topography initially discouraged exploitation and as such its interior was still virtually unknown to them.

Advances in technology however, such as quinine (discovered between 1860 to 1870) to treat tropical diseases, the steamboat, and the telegraph, as well as the Maxim gun in 1885<sup>8</sup> facilitated further explorations into the interior of SSA. Between 1788 and 1877, explorers were dispatched to chart the continent and upon their return were subsequently given platforms to present their findings through public lectures, publications, symposiums and discourse.<sup>9</sup> Included in these discussions were the depiction of SSA peoples and culture as backward and uncivilized savages, but most importantly these explorers revealed the abundance of natural resources and other potential the continent had to offer (Goucher et al, 1998). Europe in the throes of its industrial revolution was looking for raw materials and other forms of infrastructures to satisfy this phase in its development. Therefore, access to these resources became of utmost necessity to maintain and expand the European infrastructure.

In particular, King Leopold II of Belgium, motivated by ambition to expand the wealth and territory of his small European kingdom, was able to negotiate and obtain bogus land and trade agreements with local leaders along the Congo River basin. The Belgian action triggered what is now known as “the scramble for Africa” as other entrepreneurs petitioned their governments to establish their presence on the continent. To avoid major conflict amongst the distinct imperialist nations, Germany summoned

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<sup>8</sup>The Maxim gun made subjugation of resistant communities in SSA possible through the threat of destruction by the imperialist.

<sup>9</sup>Organizations such as The Great Britain’s Royal Geographic Society and the "Association for Promoting the Discovery of the Interior Parts of Africa" (or The Africa Association) sponsored many expeditions to Africa.



interested European parties as well as representatives from the US and the Ottoman Empire to a conference in 1884-1885 (Gifford & Louis 1971). A phenomenon which is now known as the Berlin Conference

To ensure that the spheres of influence in their political and economic interests were protected and to establish guidelines and mechanisms for acquiring and annexing territories, the Berlin Conference was primarily engineered to agree upon rules for colonizing Africa. As such, by 1914, through various treaties and agreements amongst the colonialists all of Africa, with clearly demarcated imperial boundaries, albeit without consideration for the physical reality on the ground, was claimed by the imperial powers Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, Germany<sup>10</sup>, Belgium and Italy (Fig. 4). In most cases, these imperialists have never trodden on these territories (Al Jazeera English, 2010, Sept.2). Only Ethiopia and Liberia had not been colonized. Ethiopia had resisted Italian colonization attempts, whilst the United States established Liberia as a colony for freed slaves as a viable option to solve its “negro problem” (Cleary, 2014). Imperial powers justified colonialism as” the ‘civilizing’ mission or “*la mission civilisatrice*,” of the backward African “indigenous” populations who would benefit from the enlightened European culture. Said (1993) describes these as “Europe's mission in the dark world” (p. 22).

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<sup>10</sup>The Treaty of Versailles ended the state of war between Germany and the Allied Powers. As part of the agreement, Germany lost its colonies to France and Great Britain.



Figure 4. Colonial Africa

**Civilizing mission or ‘La Mission Civilisatrice.’** Social Darwinism which had gained ascendancy amongst Western European elites by the 1860s has at its core the belief of innate superiority of the white European race and the inferiority of other races. This superiority therefore grants ‘manifest destiny’ to Europeans to rule over others (Pella, 2015; Leonard, 2009; Brown, 2009). As such European explorers dispatched to chart the African continent between 1788 and 1877 observed the traditional African way

of life through this European cultural prism and as such depicted indigenous African peoples and culture as backward and uncivilized savages. This sense of divine destiny is vividly encapsulated by Rudyard Kipling's renowned phrase "the white man's burden" which urges that Europeans have the moral obligation to impose their ways of life on those considered inferior.

Hence this European preoccupation with race and other attributes as veritable measures of 'civilization' was the apparent justifier for colonialism. Therefore, Social Darwinism as practiced through the civilizing mission entailed the fundamental assumption that African "indigenous" populations, in their backward and primitive state would receive the benefits of European civilization. Colonialism in SSA was therefore a necessary venture given the belief that it will civilize and uplift the African inferior race. Nevertheless, the ultimate aim of colonization was the continued access to the abundant natural resources and other possibilities that were vital to the European industrial revolution that initiated the European scramble for Africa. Therefore, the period after the Berlin Conference to the era of decolonization established colonialism as a formal mechanism of imperialism. Imperial powers now embarked on a new phase of consolidation by exerting direct socioeconomic and political control on their new conquered territories by establishing formal imperial administrations that will further their aim.

The models of socioeconomic and political governance structures that the colonialist instituted are indicative of not only what kind of imperial system and imperial subject they wanted to create and how they envisaged the executions of the civilizing

project, but also how they perceive themselves as innately Belgians, Portuguese, French or British. The Belgians and Portuguese for example exercised control through assimilation and practiced a system of direct rule<sup>11</sup>. The French on the other hand initially implemented the assimilation model, but later attempted an inconsistent hybrid of both assimilation and association structures, but heavily focused on the assimilation policy (Clignet & Foster, 1964). The Portuguese and French considered their African colonies as extensions of their respective countries and sought to civilize them by absorbing or assimilating them administratively and culturally (Crowder, 1964; Thorn, 2000). The French however, envisioned making Africans into Frenchmen (Mazrui & Tidy, 1984), whilst the Portuguese sought to include assimilated Africans preferably with Portuguese ancestry in a postcolonial integrated Europe (Khapoya, 2012). The British on the other hand, adopted the association model as evidenced by the policy of indirect rule<sup>12</sup>. In this association model, per Cooke (2003), the African can never be equal or assimilated into the British society, but can acquire a British way of life. Thus, Africans as envisaged by the British can govern themselves in a postcolonial era with ideas learned and internalized during the civilizing process from the British. However, although the British did not formally articulate the assimilation governance model Clignet & Foster (1964) as well as Kiwanuka (1970) maintain that the British also pragmatically employed both a hybrid of assimilation and association models. Nevertheless, the British governance

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<sup>11</sup>The direct imposition of imperial dictates without regard for existing local political relationships and structures and institutions.

<sup>12</sup>In this governance model, the pre-colonial indigenous political structure was used as agents to enforce socioeconomic control and change.

structure was preferably that of association. Finally, the Dutch and British white settlers in Southern Africa instituted the system of apartheid. The structure of apartheid considered Africans as permanently inferior and therefore must be under indefinite subjugation and tutelage of their colonial masters (Khapoya, 2012). The institutionalized racial segregation ensures little or no chance of redemption through assimilation or being acculturated into the white settlers' ways of life.

Although these governance models as practiced by the imperial powers inherently differ, what is consistent between them is that the economic goals were uniform and the assumptions underlying their "civilizing mission" were based on racial prejudice and disdain for the cultures and value systems of peoples of SSA (Kiwanuka, (1970). As such, the colonial exploitative encounter according to Crowder (1971) and Jalata (2013) was therefore characterized by physical as well as psychological violence – callousness, brutality, compulsion, coercion, terrorizing and annihilation of indigenous populations<sup>13</sup>. These socioeconomic and political structures as I will show in subsequent chapters of this dissertation still have implications in SSA even into the postcolonial era.

Therefore, my use of the term colonialism mirrors Howe's (2002) description, as a "systems of rule, by one group over another, where the first claims a right (a "right" again usually established by conquest) to exercise exclusive sovereignty over the second and to shape its destiny" (p. 30). Exclusive sovereignty according to wa Thiongo (1988)

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<sup>13</sup>According to Hochschild (1999), in the Belgian Congo, King Leopold's companies hired armed militia to go into the countryside and forcefully recruit workers for the rubber plantations. Africans who resisted were whipped or had their limbs chopped off. Severed hands were then brought to the recruiters' bosses as proof of their diligence in the recruitment exercise.

involves the practice of cultural, social, political, and economic domination, subjugation and exploitation exerted by one people, considered as superior, on another, considered as inferior.

**African resistance to colonial rule.** It must be understood however that Africans engaged in active and ongoing resistance in various capacities against European intrusion and co-opting of their territories. However, as the concept of an ‘African identity’ was yet to be established, resistance to the colonialism was not based on a unified campaign but rather rested on for example, tribal and communal affiliations. As such, the complex and sometimes tenuous sociopolitical relationships influenced resistance. Existing rivalries were upheld even through resistance as communities were likely to align with imperial powers against their enemies.

Nevertheless, some African communities for example negotiated peace and cooperation agreements with local colonial administration. The negotiations however were pragmatically entered into to avoid extinction or violent defeat. Also, Africans began to understand the inevitability of colonial conquest and thus “the possibility of using the alien presence for whatever advantage it might offer” (Bohannon and Curtin, 1971, p. 322). On the other hand, however, as the realities and extent of colonial imposition became manifest, Kalu (1985) cites that Africans indeed engaged with colonial armies in the form of light resistance to major battleground confrontations. For instance, Ware (2014) explains that Muslim scholars and their students were engaged in organizing resistance at various levels as a means to protect their social and economic autonomy. Also, although the territory was eventually annexed after their ultimate

defeat, the Zulu King Cetshwayo in 1879 routed the British and the Afrikaner armies in a major confrontation over the refusal of the king to cede tribal territory to the colonial administration (Collins, 2010). Likewise, in present day Sierra Leone, the British imposition of a residence tax and the refusal of the Temne and Mende tribes to pay the levy, resulted in a series of events that led to what is known as the Hut Tax War of 1898. The Temnes were led in the war by their resilient general, military strategist and Chief Bai Bureh (Abraham, 1974).

### **Decolonization and Post-colonialism**

The imperial wars of world wars 1 & 2 were not only pivotal moments in the history of colonization, but also signified a paradigmatic shift in ideological priorities that were to emerge in the post war international order. Europe was severely impacted economically, politically and culturally by the wars and thus lost its capacity to retain colonial relationships. These political and socio-economic realities in the aftermath of the wars were foundational to the agitation for political liberation by the colonized peoples that finally came to the fore.<sup>14</sup> Within SSA, the initial phase of decolonization is marked by the independence of Ghana in 1957, led by Kwame Nkrumah – regarded as the father of African nationalism. This was followed by a rapid and swift transition for other countries. For other Africans however, the transition to independent self-rule was protracted, mired in violence with wars of liberation and armed struggles between

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<sup>14</sup>The rise of nationalism in SSA to include the budding anti-apartheid movement in South Africa and the civil war movement in the US resulted in the issue of race and racial inequality the hallmark of the post war world.

European settlers and indigenous Africans (South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe) and even in some cases between the colonial power and Africans especially in Portuguese colonies for example, in current day Angola and Mozambique<sup>15</sup> (Al Jazeera English, 2010, Sept.2).

As many more, SSA nations were liberated, the years between the late 1950s and 1960s came to be known as the ‘the decade of Africa’. There was a sense of euphoria and hope in the region and expectations that political self-determination would alleviate the socio-economic decline that was the reality during the colonial era and ultimately enable these new countries to participate fully within the international context. However, the euphoria and aspirations were short lived as newly independent nations came to grasp the magnitude of the task of tackling a dilapidated and underdeveloped economic base wrought by the pillages of imperialism (Leys, 1975). Between 1960s and 1970s, African governmental leaderships began articulating a new ideology aimed at encapsulating the subtle and insidious political and economic influence that colonial powers still maintained in their nascent countries and named this as neocolonialism (Touré, 1962; Grundy, 1966).

**Neocolonialism.** In 1961, the All-African People’s Conference, held at Accra, Ghana in its Resolution on Neocolonialism, defined it as “the survival of the colonial system in spite of formal recognition of political independence in emerging countries, which become victims of an indirect and subtle form of domination by political,

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<sup>15</sup>The Portuguese considered their colonies as extensions of Portugal ‘Overseas Portugal’ and had no intention of granting self determination to their colonies.



economic, social, military, or technical means” (Guy, 1985 p.191). According to then President of Ghana Nkrumah (1965) the essence of neocolonialism is that “the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside” (p. ix). These descriptions of neocolonialism denote, in other words, a superficial rather than an absolute detachment from colonial rule on the part of the imperialists.

Consequently, independence did not necessarily indicate that colonial powers were ready to surrender access to SSA’s plethora of natural resources, thereby losing the enormous wealth generated by the colonization enterprise to Africans themselves. However to avoid the specter of all out colonial wars with Africans given the high level of nationalism that was present at that time, the imperial nations had come to accept that “some form of African independence was acceptable, even beneficial, as long as it was properly managed” (Reid, 2014, p. 153). Therefore, the imperialists, in order to ensure colonial continuity and influence, strategized to establish political, economic, social, military and technical links with their former colonies (Diouf, 2001). These various strategies to maintain the imperial relationships ensured the transition from formal to informal imperialism.

Neocolonialism therefore highlights the interrupted nature of imperialism in SSA - the continuation of the goals and objectives of colonialism into the postcolonial era. That is, even at independence, imperialist nations continue to implement economic and political structures albeit in nuanced manners, with the fundamental objective of access,

control and exploitation of the economies of peripheral regions. These succeeding and interrelated structures are examined below.

**Decolonization agreements.** Whether through negotiations or protracted wars of independence, the transition to independence entailed the adoption of various decolonization agreements and treaties between imperial powers and their former subjects. Whilst the manner of implementation may differ, the agenda of these accords is invariably uniform in its aim which was to maintain former colonial status quos – guaranteeing political and economic privileges to imperial powers in their former colonies. These privileges infringe not only on the sovereignty of the newly independent nations, but also perpetuate the dependent positions of Africans. Nkrumah (1965) explains that the established privileges range from preservation of military bases and troops, land concessions and tax exemptions and entitlement to raw materials. As such, a shift occurred from overt to more subtle forms of control (Zackman, 1976), which ensured continuance of the imperial project.

An example of such an agreement is Zimbabwe's Lancaster House Agreement, which was signed between the representatives of the people of Zimbabwe and the colonial powers. As part of agreement, land reform<sup>16</sup> was only to be initiated ten years after independence. Likewise, Haag (2011) examined the case of Ghana and Cameroon, former colonies of Britain and France respectively. Haag conclude that both imperial

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<sup>16</sup>The Land Appointment Act of 1930 and the subsequent Land Tenure Act of 1969, according to Pwiti & Ndoro (1999), divided Zimbabwe into European and African areas. The most fertile land was designated European territories, whilst the poorer areas were assigned to Africans. Africans were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands to make way for European settlers. The Lancaster House Agreement promised to rectify this imbalance through land reforms.

powers continue to exert influence in their former colonies. The French maintains an especially strong link through the mechanism of FranceAfrique – a tight network of formal and informal institutions and personnel that enables France to continue its imperial role in the finance, economic, military and social aspects of all its former colonies in SSA (Schraeder, 1997).

**Cold War.** The Cold War was the post WW2 relationship that developed between the US and the Soviet Union and their respective allies. In the aftermath of the war, Europe, in particular Great Britain had lost its supremacy in international relations and was replaced by the US and the USSR. The US like the other imperial powers was also, according to Amin (2001), cultivating strategies for accessing the continent's vast array of resources. The USSR opposed colonialism in line with Lenin's (1914) stance that this latest phase of capitalist development was 'imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism' (p. 1). Thus, Lenin advocated for the liberation of colonial peoples as this would weaken and undermine the system of imperialism (Agrawal, 1956).

From the perspective of Africans, the political and socioeconomic models of Western Europe had lost credibility. As decolonization progressed, African nationalists found powerful allies in the USSR during the independence movements. Consequently, many of the newly independent states maintained close diplomatic relationships with the USSR and also gravitated towards governance models reminiscent of the USSR – Socialist, Communist and Marxist. As such, there was palpable concern and fear that the newly independent SSA would pivot eastwards, thereby causing Western Europe and the US to lose their strategic spheres of influence.

In this cold war mindset, the “US sought to prevent the emergence of hostile regimes and to safeguard its access to African resources, whilst Russia focused on supporting ‘anti-imperialist’ struggles” (Jackson, 2010, p. 231) in order to further their particular ideological stance. Zeleza (2008) describes this impasse as the third war of imperialism in SSA; the subsequent ideological struggle during this era forced these two superpowers to engage in distant areas of the world, like in SSA. The Cold War significantly altered the contours of the decolonization of SSA. Whilst the two superpowers never actively and directly engaged in combat, from the African perspective however, the cold war was a ‘hot war’ given the realities of the violence – coups and assassinations, as well as brutal wars – and various other mechanisms that were put in place in the region of SSA (Lawrence, 2004; Schmidt, 2013; Woodroffe, 2013). In this way, the cold war must be considered as an integral structure in perpetuating imperialism albeit informally.

**Neoliberal globalization or globalization of neoliberalism.** The end of the 1980s witnessed the collapse of the USSR and subsequently all its inherent attachments, for example, communism, The Berlin Wall and of course the Cold War. The post-cold war era signaled the end of the classical bipolar world order that had dominated international politics since WW2. The demise of communism gave rise to a unipolar world thereby ending the era of the global agenda being set by the ideological leanings of the two superpowers. Within this new global reality, there was no other current available ideological side to align with except that of the only remaining superpower, the U.S., and

its allies who in tandem have embarked on the phenomena of globalization accompanied by a particular virulent ideology of capitalism – that of neoliberalism.

***Globality, globalization, and neoliberal globalization.*** However, despite its entry into everyday parlance and its pervasive use, the term globalization is of recent origins and is still encumbered with plurality of meanings (Hyttén & Bettez, 2008; Giddens, 1996). However, for the purposes of this dissertation, I use Scholte's (2008) conceptualization of the term. Rather than an understanding based on the fundamental character of social geography, Scholte's perspective is consistent with the view of globalization as a transformation or reconfiguration in our collective spatial actions and experiences of social geography. Within this background, it is imperative to understand that

globality identifies the planet—the world as a whole—as a site of social relations in its own right. Talk of the global indicates that people may live together not only in local, provincial, national and regional realms, but also in transborder spaces—that is, those that transcend territorial boundaries—where the world is a single place (p. 1478).

Scholte, (2008) furthers that the concept of globality connotes a sense of circumstance, whilst globalization conveys the process of gradual reconfiguration of human connectivity and interactions within the single space of globality. That is, our connections are progressing from one of “transplanetary or trans-world or territorial connectivity” to include the modern day and relatively new “supraterritorial relationships” (Scholte, 2008, p.1480). Territorial connectivity is not simply the links between nation states, localities or regions. It is, rather, the awareness of the planet as a

single social space within which links and interactions take place. On the other hand, supraterritorial relationships imply connections that transcend territorial geography. These are social connections that take place within unconfined territorial boundaries that are neither relatively connected nor plotted on axes on fixed territorial spaces. Furthermore, facilitated by the continuous advancement in technological infrastructure supraterritoriality is characterized by ease of movement; it denotes an instantaneity in trans-global relationships (ease and quick movement anywhere on the planet) as well trans-world simultaneity, (television and internet activities that project anywhere across the planet at the same time, for example CNN and Facebook).

Nevertheless, transworld and supraterritorial connections exist within a symbiotic hybrid relationship and always intersect in contemporary social relationships. For example, internet users must access the internet from a physical location. From these perspectives, globalization as a reconfiguration of spatial structure then involves “reductions in barriers to transworld social contacts. People become more able – physically, legally, linguistically, culturally and psychologically – to engage with each other wherever on earth they might be” (Scholte, 2008, p. 1478). Social justice movements are examples of the hybrid form of transworld and supraterritorial links. Many actions enacted by these organizations have origins in the supraterritorial realm where members are firstly sensitized to particular issues (through the internet) with physical manifestations in the form of collective street protests and other form of solidarity actions. The 2017 climate change gathering in Paris, the Arab Spring uprisings in 2011 as well as the worldwide Million Mask March in 2016 which witnessed

protesters from all parts of the world, assembling to register their opinions are physical manifestations of transworld and supraterritorial connections.

Therefore, Scholte's explanations give a heuristic approach to understanding the multifaceted aspects of globalization. These approaches allow for the potential to open new ways to theorize on the sometimes-overwhelming nature of the phenomena of what globalization actually entails. As such, if according to Scholte, globality refers to the planet as a single shared space and globalization as a trend and process, then this current epoch in the reconfiguration of contemporary transworld and superterritorial relationships within the planet is both characterized by and conducted within the principle and preferred policy approach of neoliberalism. All areas of human interactions – for example, political, sociocultural, and ecological – are subjected to the propagation of this ideology.

***Neoliberalism and neoliberal globalization.*** For the purposes of this dissertation, I use Harvey's (2005) description of the tenets of neoliberalism and the functions of the neoliberal state. I adopt Harvey's definition of neoliberalism given that it encompasses elements and tangible depictions of the relationship between poverty, underdevelopment and neoliberal globalization within SSA. Although many SSA citizens are not familiar with the term neoliberalism, several SSA governments are implementing its core tenets. Neoliberalism thus pervades the reality of sub Saharan Africans. Neoliberalism according to Harvey is thus:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights,

free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices. The state has to guarantee, for example, the quality and integrity of money. It must also set up those military, defense, police, and legal structures and functions required to secure private property rights and to guarantee, by force if need be, the proper functioning of markets. Furthermore, if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary. But beyond these tasks the state should not venture. State interventions in markets (once created) must be kept to a bare minimum because, according to the theory, the state cannot possibly possess enough information to second-guess market signals (prices) and because powerful interest groups will inevitably distort and bias state interventions (particularly in democracies) for their own benefit (p.2).

The neoliberal state is most concerned with the objective process of restructuring the state apparatus to achieve the above objectives of neoliberalism through:

*Privatization:* privatization entails the withdrawal of the state from the realms of production and exchanges processes. In this process, property rights of state-owned enterprises, goods and services are transferred to private investors (Kotz, 2015) in the guise of Multinational Corporation (MNCs) or Transnational Corporations (TNCs)

*Deregulation:* or free from state interference occurs when areas of the economy administered by the state are transferred to the private sectors. However, as neoliberalism dictates particular attachments to the rule of law as well as the sanctity of those institutions that guarantee the flourishing of marketism, reduced government regulations are only prescribed for those areas that are considered hindrances to profit making. These include employment practices (dismantling of unions), protection of the environment and taxations. Scholte (2005) refers to this shift from state interventionism to a more market-enabling governance as ‘reregulation rather than deregulation’ (p. 10).



*Liberalization:* the elimination of all state imposed restrictions between countries to facilitate the free movement of goods, services and capital flows between sectors regions and countries. This implies the removal of impediments to trade tariffs, unfavorable tax conditions and restrictions on foreign exchange, foreign investments and repatriation.

The reduction of barriers in the globalized economy is imperative to the formation of Supranational organizations. Supranational is described by Kowalska (2010) as a third term between the local and the national ...and between the national and global, and include for example the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR).

*Competition:* a robust competition is an extolled virtue in a neoliberal state. A competitive market is a solid infrastructural background in order to guarantee market efficiency, quality, cost and productivity. As such, the state in the global market must be constantly engaged in seeking and adopting practices that will enhance the competitive edge of its economy amongst other economies.

At the individual level, according to neoliberalism, rationality, individuality, and self-interest guide all actions (Peters 2016), therefore individuals must also be in active competition with others in society. Furthermore, given the unequal natural capacities of people little heed is given to those individuals who are unable to face the challenges of the competitive struggle. After all, the successes of the strong will eventually ‘trickle down’ to the weakest in society (George, 1999).

*Individual Responsibility:* whilst freedom is guaranteed to individuals within the market, this right does not extend however out of its confines. Previous understandings relating to the “public good” and “the community” are now being discarded as unnecessary components of a welfare state (Martinez and García 2000) to be replaced with "individual responsibility." Through the dismantling of the welfare state, and the severe cuts to public expenditure for social services, services like health, pension funds, welfare and education must then be individualized. However, as free individuals with responsibility for our own destinies, one is obligated to create paths to improve and sustain one’s human dignity.

Neoliberals acknowledge that the implementation of their doctrine cannot be an organic endeavor, but rather has to be a socially constructed process. As such, the proponents of neoliberalism have felt an urgency to organize politically with the goal of taking over a strong government and reengineering the role of the state to being it in service of a well-functioning and successful market. Harvey (2005) explains that by borrowing Gramsci’s concept of ‘common sense’ the founding fathers of neoliberalism co-opted ‘the central values of civilization’ such as human dignity and individual freedoms in order to gradually achieve political and economic dominance. These compelling and greatly appealing values according to neoliberal thought were not only threatened “by fascism, dictatorships, and communism, but also by all forms of state intervention that substituted collective judgments for those of individuals set free to choose” (p. 41). Organizing politically took the form, for example, of establishing think

tanks such as The Heritage Foundation, Business Roundtable, research centers, recruiting intellectuals and other organizations in order to disseminate the neoliberal doctrine.

In the wake of economic crisis in the late 1970s, a paradigmatic shift occurred in the philosophy of political economy that signaled the triumph of neoliberal approaches. President Reagan and Prime Minister Thatcher embraced neoliberalism and fully implemented its economic policies in the United States and the United Kingdom respectively<sup>17</sup>. Other governments in Western Europe, from across political spectrum came to adopt such policies (Hall, 2011; Hursh & Henderson, 2011; Schneider, G. & Nega, 2013). The collapse of communism ensured the ideological monopoly of neoliberalism in the whole of Europe, thereby fulfilling the neoliberal agenda of capturing “strong states” (Van Horn & Mirowski, 2009). Thus, through the process of social construction, neoliberalism became the hegemonic individual and collective perspective in various institutions. These institutions according to Althusser (1971) are Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) whose main function is to promote clandestinely the neoliberal ideology in the guise of equality, welfare and freedom. Political parties, cultural ventures, churches, education systems, the media, corporate board rooms as well as the IFIs are amongst the plurality of ISAs that have succeeded in transforming neoliberalism into a global phenomenon (Mitchell, 2009).

***Neoliberal globalization - implications for SSA.*** The disintegration of the USSR had significant repercussions for the world at large, but most acutely for SSA. The region lost its importance as an immediate geopolitical or strategic interest in the

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<sup>17</sup>Commonly referred to as Reaganomics and Thatcherism

international scene. Post-cold war imperial powers were no longer compelled to delicately balance their relationships with SSA as a bulwark to the former USSR (Olsen, 1997). As such, SSA's relationship with Western powers was reoriented to operate within the ideology of neoliberal globalization.

Whilst neoliberalism, when applied within the European context has been carried out pragmatically, mostly through ideological dialogue and often by democratically elected governments, this has not been the case when exported to the postcolonial world. Globally, but most particularly in the non-western world, neoliberalism is usually imposed in an aggressive, forceful and violent manner without consultation from a majority of people, perhaps except amongst the ruling elite (Stromquist & Sanyal, 2013). This is sadly the case for SSA. As such, the current phase in the continuation of the Imperial Project is characterized by neoliberal globalization or the globalization of the economic principles of neoliberalism that has been adopted and globally disseminated by the US, Europe and other allies (Brand and Wissen 2012).

Proponents of neoliberal globalization argue that this unhindered free market, as described above, will efficiently regulate demand as well as supply and production, thereby resulting in increased global prosperity. Such elevated access to prosperity is envisaged as the panacea to the multitude of social ills that plague society and which prevents the building of a peaceful world. This ideal societal vision however has not been the case. As such, there is a plethora of anti-globalization sentiments and many proposals for alternatives. For example, Falk (1999) discusses globalization as rooted in political and socioeconomic domination and subordination that, in turn, engenders inequality - it is

in short a ‘Predatory Globalization’. Bauman (1998) also emphasizes the limits and “polarizing” aspects of globalization. I contend that these negative portrayals must not be conflated with the many possibilities that are inherent in reconceptualizing globalization as a restructuring of interactions within social space advocated by Scholte as I detailed above, but rather with neoliberalism as an economic policy approach that marks this current phase of global restructuring.

Indeed, the process integral to neoliberal globalization has resulted in what Harvey (2005) describes as ‘creative destruction,’ the results of which continue to plague SSA as will be seen in Chapter Four of this dissertation. Therefore, it is from these perspectives that I make particular and acute distinctions between the process of globalization as I have discussed above and the globalization of neoliberalism. Globalization conceptualized as human interactions on a global scale has the potential to create and build upon existing resources which can offer opportunities to address the crisis of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. In particular, the momentum of the anti-globalization movements and the collective activities of different social justice movements can be further harnessed to challenge the inherent inconsistencies within the imperial apparatus.

Access to raw materials, other resources and strategic influence characterize colonial and neocolonial relationships in SSA. Consequently, structures were established to ensure these interests. In this section, I discuss the mechanisms of the imperial project, which are in essence the tools within which the structural aspects of colonization – decolonizing agreements, the cold war, and neoliberal globalization – are exerted in SSA.

Although the shift from formal to informal imperialism has resulted in these mechanisms being implemented in nuanced and subtle manners, what is clear is that they are still dynamic and inter-correlated with the explicit aim of maintaining the already established modes of imbalanced power between the center and peripheral nations. These mechanisms range from political, economic and sociocultural. The political and sociocultural mechanisms are enacted to ensure the success of the economic mechanisms. I will address the political and economic mechanisms in this section and expand further on the sociocultural mechanisms in the next chapter.

### **Neocolonial Mechanisms of the Imperial Project**

#### **Economic Mechanisms**

Economic mechanisms are tools, institutions and practices adopted within the economic sector of a country in order to bring about a particular set of desired change and outcome. With reference to imperialism, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) describe these mechanisms as Extractive Economic Institutions. Extractive institutions are those institutions set up by the political elite to exploit the masses through the extraction of resources from the society. Imperial powers have all sought to control other nations to enable them to transfer as much of the resources of the colonized countries to the colonizer, with the minimum amount of investment possible; the same is true in the postcolonial era. Extractive institutions include control of land, coerced labor, control of natural resources, and control of markets and production.

**Expropriation of land.** Control of land has always been of significant importance to the imperial project. It was, after all, the control of territories that was eventually

parceled into ‘spheres of influence’ and over which colonialists subsequently claimed ownership and established the right, which granted and ensured imperialism as a formal reality. Consequently, many indigenous peoples were expelled from swathes of land that were considered important resources by the colonial authorities. For example, the colonization strategy of settler colonialism as a political system was adopted in regions of SSA that were not only climatically conducive, but also in environments that were less disease ridden, which minimized the risk of contracting diseases.

Settler colonies involve the transfer of population to a new territory with the view to permanently occupying the place, thereby displacing the indigenous population (Wolfe, 2006). Settlers simultaneously maintain political allegiance to their country of origin as well as replicating European institutions in the acquired territory. Crosby (1986) refers to these settlements as ‘Neo-Europes.’ Within SSA, Southern & Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia), Angola, Mozambique, South West Africa (Namibia), Kenya and South Africa were territories administered as settler colonies. However, as the people of SSA sought the right to self-determination in these parts of the region, the Neo-Europes in these countries fiercely resisted relinquishing territories and accepting black majority rule. For example apartheid South Africa argued that relinquishing control to a postcolonial geopolitical structure ruled by blacks will ensure the demise of its *cordon sanitaire*<sup>18</sup>. The subsequent 1966 to 1989 Border War was South Africa’s strategic policy of destabilizing these newly independent states within Southern Africa. Its ultimate aim

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<sup>18</sup>A contiguity of white-ruled states which South Africa had established as a buffer zone to protect its racial and political borders from ‘black Africa’.

was to prevent what was referred to in Afrikaans Language as the *Swart Gevaar* (in English – the Black Danger/Threat or the perceived security threat posed from militant black Africans to the white government) from reaching South Africa. Cold war anxieties added another dimension to tensions within the region and eventually internationalized the crisis in the region with the involvement of the USSR, the US and Cuba.

The expropriation of land within SSA in the era of neoliberal globalization is characterized by a ‘global land rush’ (Marguilis et al, 2013) or ‘land grabs’ (Murphy, 2013) through large-scale purchases or leases by transnational and domestic corporate investors, governments and local elites taking control over large quantities of land to use in ways that do not necessarily benefit those communities. These projects include oil and mineral exploration; agricultural uses to produce food, biofuel, and other industrial commodities for the international or domestic markets. Such land deals are often associated with very low levels of transparency, consultation and respect for the rights of local communities living off the land (Borras and Franco, 2010; Zoomers, 2010; Anseeuw et al, 2012). As documented by Muriisa et al., (2014) and Mwesigye, (2014); Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC) 2014), President Museveni of Uganda since 2005, encouraged the forcible and/or fraudulent sale and sometimes violent evictions of Ugandan landowners from their tracts of land to guarantee access to Multinational Corporations (MNCs) and Transnational Corporations (TNCs).

#### **Control of natural resources, markets, systems, and methods of production.**

Access to the abundant natural resources and other possibilities that were vital to the European industrial revolution initiated the European scramble for Africa. Nevertheless,



“resource abundance” did not have the same connotations during colonialism given that much of these natural resources were either unknown or inaccessible with pre-industrial technology or were not yet valuable even overseas.<sup>19</sup> Resources at that time included gold, ivory, and copper as well as vast potential for plantations to grow commercial and cash crops, such as palm and peanut oils, rubber, tea, coffee, cotton. Cheap, and in some cases in SSA coerced labor ensured the production process of raw materials to ultimately feed factories and provide markets for the sale of surplus finished goods. Currently, technological advances have facilitated the mapping of territories, and as such, the available natural resources of nation states within SSA are quite well known to international organizations and MNCs.

To achieve this goal of total control, imperialist powers view an efficient system of exploitation as vital. During Colonialism, per Settles (1996), it became imperative to “vertically integrate” SSA into the colonies of Europe by controlling production from start to finish. All activities, including banking, communication, transportation, were oriented towards “the mother country” (p. 15). The system of agriculture was reoriented to growing commercial and cash crops for export, which kept prices low for European consumers. Each colony specialized in the export of particular crops and minerals. The raw materials came back through the import of cheap finished goods for the SSA markets. Roads and railway systems were built to run from the plantations and mines in the interior to the coast, bound for the dockyards of Europe; and Africans were permitted

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<sup>19</sup>For example, many of the major discoveries (oil in Nigeria and diamonds in Botswana) were to occur only during the period of decolonization.

only to trade with the Europeans<sup>20</sup>. These colonial mechanisms guaranteed SSA's integration within the world market system as a producer of raw materials and consumer of goods, ensuring a system that still perpetuates into the post-colonial era, as the cold war and neoliberal globalization structures adopted new mechanisms to ensure this relationship.

**Foreign aid/debt/loans.** In the immediate era of post-colonization, some SSA nations enjoyed brief increases in economic productivity. However, the economic mechanisms instituted during the colonial era, the economic programs designed by the World Bank for the new independent states, as well as some poor investment decisions by newly inexperienced leadership,<sup>21</sup> cut short the new gains (Shivji, 2008; Locke, 2010). Nascent SSA governments were therefore unable to fulfill the great expectations of their people.

On the other hand, according to Danso (1990); Fole (2003); Mandel (2006) and Aluko & Arowolo (2010), the (IFIs) were flush with Eurodollar reserves at their disposal as a result of the oil price boom in the late 1960s to 1970s, and were eager to disburse to willing customers. Given its immediate post-colonial economic stagnation, SSA was an ideal candidate. The IFIs prescribed that SSA needed vast injection of investment capital to spur national economic development. As such, following the success of the Marshall

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<sup>20</sup>For example, French colonies traded with France; British colonies with Britain and Portuguese colonies with Portugal.

<sup>21</sup>Established a welfare state backed by massive state intervention model in the economy – for example nationalizing key industries. This was aimed to increase employment and standard of living for the Africans.

Plan<sup>22</sup> in Europe, and consistent with the new moral language of ‘developmentalism’, SSA was inundated with aid packages,<sup>23</sup> which, with promising natural resources, the region could mortgage for loans. Also, foreign companies, by negotiating mutually lucrative arrangements with incumbent regimes moved rapidly to do business in places considered risky but extremely profitable (Young, 2004).

However, maintaining strategic geopolitical and economic interests was the overriding factor in this period of transition from the immediate postcolonial era to the emerging cold war reality. Aid packages then became a significant mechanism in the arsenal to address the imperial powers’ loss of territorial control, as well as dealing with cold war insecurities. SSA leaders were granted aid packages based on their alignment and commitment to the pro-western agenda. According to Moyo (2009a), “by 1965, when around half of sub-Saharan Africa's roughly fifty states were independent, aid had already reached at least \$950 million” (p. 15). By the end of the 1970s, cheap loans had morphed into significant debt burdens. Between 2010-2015, according to the WB (2017) SSA’s external debt stock between 2010-2015 was \$416.3 billion.

The global economic crisis of the 1970s and the subsequent ‘Volcker Shock’<sup>24</sup> resulted in increased global interest rates. Consequently, SSA was unable to meet is

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<sup>22</sup>An aggressive economic aid package devised in 1948 by then U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall to help Europe recover from the ravages of WWII.

<sup>23</sup>Aid packages came in the form of loans and grants that were used for capital investments as well as purchase of arms to ensure the powerbase of SSA leadership.

<sup>24</sup>Neoliberals argued that economic stability can best be achieved by controlling inflation through raising interest rates. Then Chairman of the Federal Reserve Volker agreed with this analysis in 1979. This was the inaugural implementation of neoliberal policy within the western hemisphere.

burgeoning debt repayments and the Debt Crisis was born. The Debt Crisis thus provided the opportunity for another mechanism in the form of a newly repackaged economic order in the guise of Structural Adjustment Policies to be implemented in the region. Shivji (2003) explains that if the 1960s and 1970s are regarded as the ‘age of developmentalism’, the 1980s must be characterized as Africa’s lost decade. The Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) under the IFIs facilitated the next phase in the 1990s. This age of neoliberal globalization marked the transition and expansion of the SAPs into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The end of the cold war heralded the triumph of the capitalist west. As such, the western world was no longer obligated to court leaders in SSA. In this new landscape, although international funding and other forms of support from the Western world could still be accessed, this was now however, on significantly different terms.

**Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).** In 1981 the World Bank published *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Agenda for Action*, a report of a study requested by the African governors of the IMF and World Bank. According to this report, “the remedy for Africa’s ailing economies lies in giving market forces freer play to bring about dynamism and efficiency” (Ake, 2001, p. 24). Likewise, to avert the collapse of the lending banks, in the wake of the debt crisis a group of high level officials at the IFIs, the Inter-American Development Bank, the US Executive, various think tanks interested in economic policy and interested members of Congress (Babb, 2013) convened in 1989. The goal of the meeting was to discuss the emerging

debt crisis in Latin America and other parts of the world including SSA. The economic policy document, that emerged from this, the Washington Consensus, named after the US capital where the meeting was held, outlined a universal, 'positive' set of economic policies detailing "what poor countries should do to become more prosperous" (Naim, 2000, p. 87). These policy recommendations, which emphasize economic growth, that is consistent with the neoliberal policy paradigm, continues to drive the neoliberal globalization debate in SSA. Its ten points list includes cutting budget deficits and public expenditure; lowering taxes; liberalizing financial markets and the exchange rate; reducing import tariffs; abolishing barriers to foreign direct investment; privatization; and fostering competition (Gay 2007). Social development was regarded as a consequential result (Hall 2011). As such, The Action Report as well as the Washington Consensus are acknowledged as the conceptual genesis of the SAPs, as strategies or conditionalities which countries must adopt to either qualify for World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans or receive concessions on repaying older debts owed to commercial banks, Western governments and the World Bank.

Unfortunately, for the peoples of SSA, the macro-economic reforms did not yield the intended effects. As a result of failure of the SAPs as a viable economic policy, the IFIs were challenged with a crisis of legitimacy; rather than benefit those in poverty, the SAPs were conceived as another avenue to further enrich those individuals that had provoked the crisis in the first place. As such, it became prudent on the part of the IFIs as well as the wider international community to seek alternative approaches for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction in SSA - UNICEF's (1987) call for 'adjustment

with a human face' is an example of the renewed impetus that was to emerge (Pender, 2001; Williamson, 2003).

By the end of the 1990s, the MDGs became the new mechanism for the imperial project in SSA. According to Young (2004) and Fukuda-Parr & Hulme (2009), the MDGs was a significant shift from the SAPs. In addition to the dictates of the Washington Consensus, what SSA needed this time around according to the IFIS was to also focus on poverty eradication and human well-being as well as to institute political reform in the form of democratization as central objectives of development; hence the eight categories as enshrined in the MDGs (See Figure 5 below).

In consultation and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, governments develop and submit relevant plans of actions known as The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs). The PRSPs are fundamental mechanisms of the MDGs that participating governments are required to submit. In consultation and partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, governments develop relevant plans of actions indicating the various social and structural policies and processes to be adopted in order to meet the goals of promoting economic growth and subsequently reduce poverty by 2015.

Nevertheless, there is ample evidence to indicate that these economic and political prescriptions have neither reduced poverty, nor increased prosperity for Africans. Indeed, the IFIS (UNDP, 2014), economist and scholars alike (Saha, 2008; Aleyomi, 2012) have since recognized these realities and have been continuously stating that SSA is not on track to meet the MDGs. Rather the MDGs have resulted in a proliferation of foreign

MNCs and TNCs keen to take advantage of resources offered at cheaper and profitable rates. Curtis (2016) details the manipulations of UK government through its unshakeable support of the SAPs and MDGs to ensure British companies gain and retain access to SSA's raw materials. Currently, "101 companies listed on the London Stock Exchange (LSE) — most of them British — have mining operations in 37 sub-Saharan African countries... [and] collectively control over \$1 trillion worth of Africa's most valuable resources" (p. 3).

For example, the Zambian government's experiences in the process of privatizing its copper mines in 2000, bears all the hallmarks of the scenarios inherent in these arrangements. Private investments were expected to bring in much needed revenue and opportunities for improving operational efficiency, as well as re-investment that would ensure social and financial benefits through jobs and much need training. However, the reality has been to the contrary. The African Progress Panel (2013) reports that while Zambia's minerals industry exported a total of US\$10 billion in 2011, Zambia itself collected only US\$240 million in tax mining revenue, which amounts to just 2.4 percent of the revenue from mineral exports.

Eventually, in summer 2015, the UN announced that only six countries in SSA – Angola, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Mali and Sao Tome e Principe out of the fifty-one nations in SSA have met only MDG 1 out of the total eight MDGs. In September 2015, The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals with its 17 goals replaced the MDGs (See Figure 5). The SDGs aims to “end

poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all... Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years” (UN, 2017).



Figure 5. The MDGs & SDGs

However, the mechanisms of extractive economic institutions, as I detail above, do not exist in a vacuum, but are supported by political institutions as discussed below.



## **Political Mechanisms**

Political mechanisms are policies, institutions and structures implemented within a political entity in order to exert a preferred outcome. Within the context of imperialism in SSA, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) refer to these institutions as extractive political institutions. What characterizes these institutions is that they concentrate power in the hands of a few, without constraints or checks and balances, with the fundamental goal of ensuring political stability. In other words, they work towards the imposition of a weak state in order to create a peaceful and favorable climate that is conducive to ensuring that the economic mechanisms function with ease. Extractive political institutions include:

**Divide and rule.** The practice of divide and rule remains a constant political mechanism in the imperial project. In this type of governance model, leadership consolidate power by routinely engaging in actions that set those under their rule “at variance with one another... and sow discord among them” (Kant, 2010, 1795) by dismantling existing power structures and creating new ones that are favorable to the leadership agenda. This ultimately renders the population ineffective and powerless to mount any meaningful challenge. In their powerlessness, they instead turn to the protection of the leadership against other groups. All imperial powers, but much more the British colonial empire engaged in this strategy leaving a legacy of deep rooted divisions and hatred in SSA (Madubeunega, 2015). In colonial Rwanda, tribal and racial identities were manipulated to ensure the colonial status quo. The Germans and later Belgians had successfully exploited and subsequently implemented a hierarchical system amongst two indigenous tribes. In this racial and tribal stratification, the Tutsis were identified as

racially more superior than their neighbors the Hutus. Through alliance with the Tutsis, colonial rule flourished to the advantage of the Tutsis. Wolfe (2006) describes that in this partnership, Tutsis had become comprador elite who facilitated the exploitation of the agriculturalist Hutu and lower-order Tutsis. Likewise, in the Rift Valley area in Kenya, British colonial rule established tenuous relations between ethnic groups that previously had no significant interactions and permanently altered the ethnic composition and security in the Rift Valley area (Human Rights Watch, 1993). This practice of divide and rule of tribes recurs across SSA.

To further the quest for continued and uninterrupted access in the neoliberal era, neoliberal mechanisms routinely engage in political and thereby socio-economic manipulations of already fragile dynamics inherent in SSA nation states. The nations of North Sudan and the world's newest country, South Sudan are most noted contemporary examples. In colonial times, the territories comprising these two nation states were administered by the British as the Muslim North and the Christian African South. However, at independence, both the northern and southern regions were united to form the new country of Sudan, with Northern Sudan inheriting the colonial apparatus. The country was rife with racial and religious conflict undertones. The South accused the North of operating a system of apartheid. The subsequent discovery of oil shifted the power dynamics. The South began a secession movement, which succeeded in gaining independence and statehood in 2011. However, shortly after independence armed conflict erupted along ethnic lines, which endures to date. Upon close examination and analysis, Cartalucci, (2014) and Bowie (2014) conclude that access to the oil fields of South Sudan

is the ultimate genesis to this civil unrest as Western MNCs seek to wrest control from Chinese MNCs, which the latter have actively cultivated before the partitioning of the former Sudan. The epicenter of the clashes is primarily in the oil producing regions of the country.

In order to impose unpopular policies on the populace, the imperial project requires the presence of strong and effective leadership from the state to local levels as follows:

**Hierarchical leadership.** The colonial state functioned primarily as the bastion of law and order to sustain the economic aim of colonialism. The “authoritarian administrative apparatuses, with a powerful governor at the helm” (Sandbrook & Barkar 1985, p. 85) guaranteed compliance from indigenous Africans and thereby the extraction of resources. The use of this mechanism remains unchanged in the period of informal imperialism. Instead of formal state control, institutions, treaties and agreements are now the preferred administrative apparatus that ensure the imperial project.

***Institutions – IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Criminal Court (ICC).*** The neoliberal policy of the Washington Consensus recommendations are implemented globally by national as well as international institutions and entities such as Western governments, MNCs & TNCs; the IFIs, corporate entities like the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Services Network (ESN), the U.S. Coalition of Service Industries (USCSI) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and since the 1990s UN agencies (Hall, 2011; Baab, 2013 &

Patoma'ki, 2009). However, it is the IFIs, particularly the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that have become the public face of this political imperial mechanism.

The WB and the IMF, together known as the Bretton Woods Institutions,<sup>25</sup> were envisaged as bodies that would restructure international finance and trade in the wake of the devastation of WW2. Specifically, the WB was expected to facilitate capital investment by lending money to decimated western European countries for reconstruction and development projects. The IMF on the other hand manages the global financial system by regulating monetary policies. The role of the World Trade Organization (WTO) was to ensure an efficient international trade system.

The WB and IMF are private, for-profit owned government banks made up of 189-member countries. Voting powers are allocated according to a country's financial contribution. The US, with 18% of the votes, is the majority shareholder. The US together with Germany, Japan, the UK and France control 40% of shares in both institutions (World Bank, 2016). However, in the wake of the Debt Crisis and the adoption of neoliberalism by the majority shareholders, the Bretton Woods Institutions' role was repurposed from using their own resources to facilitate reconstruction and development to be a mechanism for the continuation of the imperial project and to ensure the recuperation of borrowed monies.

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<sup>25</sup>A meeting in 1944 at Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA where over 700 delegates from some forty-four countries resolved to establish a framework for a global system of financial and monetary management.

The Statute of Rome established the ICC in 2002. The ICC is a permanent international court with the jurisdiction to prosecute individual perpetrators accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of aggression and war crimes (Barnes, 2011). The ICC is currently comprised of 114 nation state members: 15 Asian states; 18 Eastern European; 25 Latin American and Caribbean states and 25 are Western European and other states; and SSA making the bulk of the membership with 31 countries. The US is not a member of this agreement, citing the concern that the treaty lacked insufficient protection against politicized prosecutions (Leigh 2001).

However, the court has been severely criticized by the African Union (AU). In the court's 11-year history, all the thirty-six defendants it indicted are from SSA leadership. Recently South Africa, Burundi and Kenya have introduced measures in their national parliaments proposing to exit the ICC as a result of this alleged bias. In line with my thesis on the contours of the imperial project, McCargo (2015) argues that this posturing by the ICC implies unfair selectivity at best, and smacks of neocolonialism at worst. Also, de Waal & Stanton (2009) allude to the West using the court as another platform to execute regime changes on SSA leaders that are deemed recalcitrant to follow the neoliberal agenda.

***Military presence and/or interventions and defense agreements.*** These are further symbiotic political mechanisms that perpetuate the imperial project. Military presence, per Haag (2001), includes defense agreements between imperial powers and SSA nations. In exchange for favorable or exclusive economic conditions, as well as access to natural resources, imperial powers guarantee the security of the leadership in

the SSA nation. Military intervention is used to fulfill the conditions of the defense agreement. This includes quelling unrest, preventing coups and maintaining stability to access resources.

During the transfer of power, France through its policy of *FranceAfrique* successfully established lasting security relationships through defense and military assistance agreements with most of its former SSA colonies. The British, unlike the French, adopted a pragmatic approach, by negotiating formal and informal agreements based on the strategic importance of the former colony. Britain still maintains a ‘strong program of military assistance and cooperation’ with Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Sierra Leone (Wyss, 2016). In the Sierra Leone civil war, Britain directly intervened on the side of the government; this helped to eventually end the war and returned ousted President Tejan Kabba to power (Woods & Reese, 2010; Tossini, 2017).

However, for both the British and French, the agreements were contextual to the sensibilities of the cold war era, but also progressed into the current era as a means to maintain regional hegemony. France, according to Charbonneau (2016), still maintains permanent military presence originally intended to ‘defend and protect’ SSA from the communist threat, but still retains the ability to intervene in the internal affairs of its former colonies. Between 1997 and 2002, France launched 33 operations in the region from these bases. For example, France stands accused of interfering in the election of Gabon to ensure its preferred candidate President Ali Bongo assumes office (Crumley, 2009), and also directly intervening in 2011 to remove President Laurent Gbagbo from power (Howden, 2011) after a contested election in that country.

The recent and most pervasive of military relationships with SSA that furthers the imperial project is the imposition of the US African Command (AFRICOM) since 2008 within the political and socio-economic spheres in the region. At its most benign level, AFRICOM was presented by President Bush as another mechanism that would “enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa” (White House Press Release, 2007).

However, scholars such as Besteman (2008), Nathan (2009), de Arimatéia da Cruz & and Stephens (2010) as well as many SSA leaders are expressing concern that in the post-cold war era, the US is mainly concerned with SSA only as complementary to pursuing its national security interests at the expense of SSA’s own concerns. For example, AFRICOM was presented as a *fait accompli* to the people of SSA without the opportunity to engage in the conceptualizing phase of the project. The national security interests of the US include guaranteed access to oil and other natural resources, countering and rebuffing China’s own imperial ambitions in SSA, and as a front in the US’s fight in the global war on terror within the scope of military agreements with SSA nations. AFRICOM has, amongst others, bases in Djibouti, Burkina Faso, Mali, South Sudan and Chad. Under the guise of capacity building, it conducts joint military training and other activities with host nations, trains proxies to engage with identified ‘terror’ groups in the region. AFRICOM according to Campbell (2013), formed part of the military intervention team that ousted former President Gbagbo of Ivory Coast as well as the team that made an incursion in Mali citing the presence of Islamic terrorism in the

area. All these activities are raising the concern of a seeming militarization of the US's policy vis a vis SSA to further its own interest, but which does not benefit SSA in its efforts to alleviate realities of poverty and underdevelopment (Keenan, 2008).

***Strongman leadership to enforce policies.*** Imperial powers have always recognized the need for indigenous SSA leadership at the local level. During colonization whether it was indirect rule as instituted by the British or direct rule as practiced by the rest of the imperial powers, local leaders – kings, chiefs or headmen – were invited, appointed, coerced or bribed to become part of the colonial governance structure. In exchange for enforcing local ordinances on their people, including collecting taxes and ensuring constant supply of cheap labor, these leaders were given protection and other benefits, monetary and otherwise, by the colonial government.

Likewise, the US under Eisenhower recognized that given the post-colonial political and economic vulnerabilities, democracy would fail in SSA. He then implemented the policy of implanting 'local strongmen' to ensure the U.S.'s interests (Serumaga, 2015). Once a local 'strongman' was identified, according to Harvey (2005), he was provided military and economic assistance for him, his family and immediate circle to ensure the accumulation of considerable wealth and thus the consolidation of their power base. In return, Western powers were guaranteed access to facilitate their interests at will within the continent. Particularly, the doctrine of odious debt has origins in these relationships cultivated by western powers and Africa's strongmen. Odious Debts involve - the use of borrowed money by SSA's strongmen in ways that are



contrary to the interest of their citizens with knowledge or even tacit approval from the creditors, the IFIs and private syndicated banks (Sarr et al, 2011).

Mobutu Sese Seko of the Democratic Republic of Congo (former Belgian Congo) epitomizes the practical manifestation of the strongman policy in SSA. The decolonization of Congo and its turbulent transition to democracy initiated a series of events that facilitated the rise of Mobutu to power. Lumumba, the first democratically elected Prime Minister was deemed a recalcitrant nationalist with left-wing sympathies by the Western powers (Serumaga, 2015) and was ultimately assassinated, with active involvement of the CIA and the Belgian government (Blum, 2003; Meredith, 2005). Mobutu renamed the country Zaire, and subsequently solidified his 35-year (1965-1990) ruthless dictatorship over the country, with intermittent single party elections. Under Mobutu's tenure, Nugent (2004) estimates that more than five billion dollars was siphoned into European banks, with full support from the Western powers (Namikas, 2014). Mobutu's reign was characterized by political and socio-economic decline with poverty and underdevelopment marked by infrastructural neglect, shortages and political strife, which still endures today.

Similarly, the founding fathers of neoliberalism had always acknowledged the importance of capturing state power in order to implement their ideology. The very weak and ineffective nature of the state in SSA however mandated a nuanced version to this plan of action, hence the continuation of the symbiotic relationship of the 'local strongmen' doctrine practiced during the cold war, as I have detailed above. However, the unipolar world that emerged in the aftermath of the cold war altered the politico-

economic architecture (Basiru, 2014), and thus changed the compliance criteria for the ‘strongmen’ relationships. In this new arena, the symbiotic relationships that were cultivated were based upon the rejection of socialist or communist ideologies on the part of SSA leadership to that of adopting and implementing the mechanisms of the neoliberal agenda through the SAPs, PRSPs, MDGs and now the SDGs even to the consternation of their citizens.

A further criterion that ‘strongmen’ must adopt within the neoliberal state is that of economic as well as political democratization with a heightened emphasis on good governance and respect for human rights (Henriot, 1998). However, given the imperative placed on economic democratization – deregulation; liberalization; competition etc, – political democratization can be overlooked by the neoliberal apparatus. As such, SSA leaders continue to subject their economies to the neoliberal agenda which has been overwhelmingly unfavorable for their people in terms of sustaining poverty and underdevelopment.

Meanwhile, in this symbiotic relationship, in exchange for institutionalizing the tenets of neoliberalism in their respective nations, the actions of local strongmen are overlooked by the IFIS as enforcers of the neoliberal mechanism as they craft ingenious ways to hold on to power. These include exploiting ethnic and tribal sensibilities; manipulating the political system; ruling by force including intimidation, violence and repressions of political opponents. As such, SSA is replete with long standing dictators and Presidents for Life who prolong their stay in office in line with the Machiavellian doctrine of fear that is equally maintained by a dread of punishment that never fails.

For example, Angola's local strongman President José Eduardo dos Santos ascended to power in 1979. A Communist/Socialist at that time, his party was supported by Cuba and the former USSR in the Angolan civil war. However, upon the disintegration of the Communist Bloc, he swiftly recanted Angola's 'ideological' alliance from Socialist/Communist to embrace capitalism. dos Santos January 2010 amendment to Angola's constitution was overlooked by the enforcers. The new constitution abolished the position of Prime Minister and the powers of this office were conferred on the President. This manipulation allows President Santos to potentially continue his role until 2022.

Eighty-four years old President Paul Biya has been Cameroon's strongman since 1982. To continue as President for life, Biya enacts various measures. For example, in what Cameroonians now term 'bosses for life' the president consistently staffs the civil service with the same loyal individuals in order to cultivate a loyal following. President Biya ignores constitutional provisions by routinely sanctioning arbitrary arrests and detention without trial. President Biya also systematically eliminates political rivals and those perceived as a threat. In 2009, Biya relieved the Prime Minister of his duties citing corruption. The Prime Minister and other top-ranking government officials were subsequently jailed.

In 2008 the Cameroon parliament voted to change the constitution. This new constitution abrogated the previous two term limits. As such, it not only allows President Biya to run for a third term in office but will also guarantee him immunity from any prosecution when he leaves office. According to the Cameroon Daily Journal, supporters

of the President are floating proposals for upcoming elections to be held in 2017 and not in 2018 as previously scheduled. President Biya will again contest that election.

My analysis above indeed makes explicit the direct connections and interplays between the political and economic mechanisms of imperialism. As the goal of imperialism is primarily economic, the political mechanisms enacted by the imperial powers indeed ensure its promulgation. Although the shift from formal to informal imperialism has resulted in these mechanisms being implemented in nuanced and subtle manners, what is clear is that they are still dynamic and inter-correlated with the explicit aim of maintaining the already established modes of imbalanced power between the center and peripheral nations. The political and sociocultural mechanisms are enacted to ensure the success of the economic mechanisms. Indeed, as I have portrayed in the above paragraphs, both the economic and political mechanisms of imperialism have remained largely unchanged through the span of time. In particular, the extractive political institutions guarantee the conditions for the economic mechanisms of imperialism to thrive. Nevertheless, although control is accessed in insidious and surreptitious manners, in tandem, the fundamental objective is to prolong as long as necessary the uninterrupted imperial project.

### **Conclusion**

SAA is blessed with an abundance of natural and human resources. Paradoxically however, poverty and underdevelopment continue to plague the region resulting in deplorable living standards for many of its inhabitants. These realities of poverty and underdevelopment are the lived experiences for a vast majority of Africans. In this

dissertation, I am arguing that the structures and mechanisms inherent in the uninterrupted imperial project continue to keep these phenomena in place. In this chapter through my analysis grounded in archival evidence, I gave a background context to these issues. First, I provided a brief overview of poverty and underdevelopment as well as establishing the relationship between them. Second, I presented an analysis of the structures of imperialism followed by its mechanism. It is clear that although imperial powers differ in their approaches to the imperial project, exploitation of resources remains the constant and fundamental objective. In Chapter 3, I deliberate on education as a socio-cultural mechanism of the imperial project.

## CHAPTER III

### BACKGROUND CONTEXT: HISTORY OF EDUCATION - FROM PRE-COLONIAL TO POST-COLONIAL SUB SAHARAN AFRICA

#### **Introduction**

The fact that Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) is facing a prolonged developmental crisis as a result of its sustained and wide spread levels of rampant poverty is not a contested issue amongst those scholars familiar with these phenomena in the continent (Akyeampong et al 2014). Furthermore, the qualitative evidence and realities from the collective experiences of Africans also give credence to the position of the scholars in their descriptions and assertions of the nature of poverty and underdevelopment as it pertains to SSA. For example according to the World Bank (2017), whilst the general trend in stunted growth amongst children as a result of poor nutrition has declined globally, the number in SSA has increased from nearly 45 million to 57 million in 2015. Also, according to Kasper & Bajunirwe (2012), although SSA has 25% of the global disease burden, it has only 3% access to the world's health care workers. Such challenges in health systems are resulting in high infant and maternal mortality rates, increasing HIV rates and prevalence of preventable diseases such as cholera and malaria.

In this dissertation, I am arguing that the ideological concept of imperialism is the major factor that upholds this poverty and underdevelopment regression in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA). I name this the imperial project in SSA. That is, although all SSA nations either through transfers or after wars of independence were granted freedom

from colonial rule, imperial powers continue to influence the political, economic and sociocultural trajectories of these SSA countries. Imperial control is sustained through the neocolonial structures of decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization, and the corresponding political, economic and sociocultural mechanism. The ultimate aim is for continued access and control of resources in SSA; hence the perpetual poverty and underdevelopment crisis in the region. Therefore, in this dissertation, I seek to analyze poverty and underdevelopment within critical perspectives as well as to contribute to a critical vision of education that will enable Sub Saharan Africans (Africans) to continue to envisage pathways that will eventually result in dismantling these structures that uphold the poverty and underdevelopment crisis in the region.

Societies have always relied upon the institution of education as a sociocultural mechanism to preserve ways of life. Particularly, I argue that imperial education continues to be used as a powerful and hegemonic tool to cultivate a specific thought process to align with the dominant structure that further the goals of imperialism. This mindset continues to render Africans incapable of establishing or sustaining significant critical spaces or opportunities to allow for meaningful engagements with the issues of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Such a state of inertia in the meantime, however allows the political and economic mechanisms of imperialism to prevail in the region. On the other hand, I also claim that that education can and must play an important role in responding to SSA's poverty and underdevelopment realities.

I have examined the economic and political mechanisms in chapter 2. In this chapter, I seek to examine education as a sociocultural mechanism of imperial education. I give a background context to education in SSA by discussing the evolution of education in SSA, from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. By examining the historical and contemporary contexts of education, I aim to illustrate linkages and connections to poverty and underdevelopment. I begin the chapter by presenting my philosophical understandings of education. I then proceed to examine the concept of education as a sociocultural mechanism from precolonial through to imperial education in SSA. The merits of precolonial education present a necessary starting point to articulate on an ‘authentic’ African education in my efforts to rethink what it means to be ‘educated’ within the context of SSA. An analysis of imperial education on the other hand provides an understanding of the various manners and methods that ensure the successful transmission of attitudes that guarantees the continued diffusion of the imperial project.

### **My Philosophical Understandings of Education**

The innate sense of survival has always compelled humankind to be more attuned in interactions within the lived environment. As such the quest for survival necessitates not only the ongoing attempt to understand themselves in relation to the world around them, but also the most efficient way of transmitting this knowledge in order to guarantee the preservation of self and one’s community. However, as a social organism, this understanding and subsequent knowledge transfer is carried out through complex social processes. Social processes according to Bardis (1979) are oft repeated social relationships between individuals and groups that are established and nurtured through



interactions, adjustments and readjustments; thereby establishing patterns of behaviors which foster the preservation of culture and social organization all achieved via the process of education.

My understanding of the aim and functions of education is consistent with my ontological presumptions which are rooted in the praxis of social justice as reflected in the premise of the spirit of my dissertation – seeking education as a response to the poverty and underdevelopment challenges in SSA. Considering this personal imperative, I am drawn to the philosophical and epistemological considerations of pragmatism, particularly epitomized by the pedagogical practices of critical theory, critical pedagogy and Deweyan pragmatism.

Therefore, in this dissertation, I use the term education to signify “not a preparation for life, rather it is for living. Education is the process of living through a continuous reconstruction of experiences. It is the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities (Dewey, 1916). Education in this broad sense is a transformative process brought about through the culmination of learning experiences and complete development that spans one’s lifetime that allows the individual to make choices for the greater good. In other words, thought must lead to action. Furthermore, this kind of learning can take place within the formal environments such as a graded education system like schools and colleges; in informal settings such as daily experiences and activities gained through interactions within the family and community and also through non-formal learning environments. Non-formal education is flexible learning spaces that

intersect between formal and informal learning environments. These include social and adult education and distance learning settings.

### **Education as a Sociocultural Mechanism**

History is replete with empires, civilization, societies and communities which for various reasons have collapsed. The void that follows their disintegration is soon replaced with other ways of living and knowing. Acculturation within these new knowledge systems is usually achieved amidst much strife and suffering to the vanquished peoples (Bass, 1997). Hence, to avoid complete annihilation and to guarantee longevity societies have always instituted mechanisms to ensure the transmission of the prevailing sociocultural factors on succeeding generations. Sociocultural factors are those set of traditions, belief systems and habits that characterize a population, whilst education is the fundamental mechanism through which social transformation occurs (Durkheim, 1982). Thus, I use sociocultural mechanism to indicate the manners in which these lifestyles, customs and value system are imparted through the education process. That is, education is the social heritage from within which individuals strive to harness desirable knowledge in relation to their environment. These relationships include ways of knowing and understanding; acquiring relevant and productive skillsets; interests; attitudes; critical thinking as well as beginning to contemplate about the deeper meanings of life and critically navigating the complex social processes, which is foundational to a positive engagement with the world.

### **Pre-colonial Education or Traditional Education**

With its varied historicity, religious beliefs, political, socio-cultural, economic and linguistic composition, SSA is undeniably diverse. Nevertheless, despite these distinctions between peoples, pre-colonial SSA was characterized by the principles of communalism, in that all members were involved in a stratified and effective process of division of labour for the greater good of the tribe and the general community.

Political power was conferred upon individuals or directly on a group of elders based on hereditary or non-hereditary status. Leaders were always supported with advisors from a council of elders from the community whose role is as advisors as well as to ensure check and balances on leadership. A hereditary ruler gained power through bloodline succession, whilst a non-hereditary governance model entailed selection of leaders based on their contribution to the welfare of the community either for reputation as warriors capable of defending the community and or ability to collect and disburse revenue. As such, ultimate political legitimacy originated from the ritual relationship of the leader or leaders to the land, to the ancestral spirits and ability to take measures to ensure the livelihood of their people, as well as the survival of the community. SSA's encounter with Islam presents a view into the manners and methods that precolonial leadership employed in their dealings with other societies and civilization. Subsequently Islamic ways of knowing became integral to pre-colonial epistemology for those Africans who became Muslim.

## **Islamic Influences**

The waters of the Indian Ocean from the east, and the desert sands of the Sahara from the north are the two gateways that allowed Islam to penetrate into SSA from both directions (Saul, 2006; Levtzion & Pouwels, 2012). Suitable means of transportation as well as the knowledge to navigate through both ocean and desert established trade routes that carried merchants and merchandise and acted as effective transmitters of religious and cultural influences (Geertz, 1968; Lewis, 1980). Islam was introduced in East Africa as early as the seventh century (Insoll, 2003) and in the West through Northern Sahara by the eighth (Clarke, 1982). It was from these two directions that again through trade and migration that the religion spread to hinterlands of SSA.

Specifically, via the Indian Ocean, Africans were living in the heartland of Islam in Mecca at the time of the Prophet of Islam and some were his earliest followers (Ali, 2012).<sup>26</sup> Also, in the face of growing persecution by the inhabitants of pre-Islamic Mecca, the Prophet sought refuge in the Kingdom of Axum in present day region of the coastline of the Horn of Africa for some of his followers. Although some of these refugees returned after the migration to Medina, others chose to remain in their new location. As such, Africa was the first location where Islam was practiced outside of the Arabian Peninsula.

With its laws and regulations governing all aspects of human behaviors and actions within the sociocultural, political and economic realms, Islam is considered a way

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<sup>26</sup>Bilal, the freed slave from present day Ethiopia is well known in Islamic history as a close companion and contemporary of the Prophet of Islam.

of life rather than a religion by its adherents. Although according to Levtzion & Pouwels, (2012), Arab merchants established contacts and linked SSA remote communities to the outside world; they were not propagators of Islam. Nevertheless, this way of life, as perceived by pre-colonial Africans sparked vast conversions to Islam, as it was attractive for socioeconomic as well as political reasons. Harris, (1954) & Arens (1975) speculate that, for example, Islam was spiritually compatible with traditional African social and cultural systems, cosmology and morality – in other words it offered support, not a challenge to traditional way of life. In addition, Ensminger (1997) argues that economic factors were crucial particularly for those communities with cultural customs and values inconsistent with that of Islam to become Muslims. As companions in faith, Arab Muslim merchants opened up vast networks and systems<sup>27</sup> of trade that were much easier for their fellow African Muslims to access.

Furthermore, Arabic as a written language allowed those communities who adopted Islam particularly in West Africa to develop their traditional literacy practices. As such, Izama (2013) and Kane (2016) observes that Islamic influences in SSA during the pre-colonial period were correlated with trade, wealth, and intellectual advances. For example according to Dallal, (1993), Arabic was taught primarily as a means to read, understand and practice Islam, thus serving as an impetus for literacy to be establish in

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<sup>27</sup>As Muslims, SSA gained immediate access to the commercial trade networks in North Africa, as well as opportunities to reach the rest of the world via these established trade routes. Systems of trade includes established monetary, accounting, and adjudicating systems to resolve financial contracts and disputes. Most important however, was the spiritual discipline that ensured adherence to contracts and agreements, ensuring mutual trust in conducting long distance trade.

these parts of precolonial SSA. Nonetheless, in addition, the Arabic language opened up opportunities for literacy to be achieved and implemented in non-religious forums. A small group of SSA individuals, well versed in the Arabic language, appropriated Arabic scripts and writing conventions to devise a form of literacy known as – Ajami. Ajami as described by Diallo (2012), “involved the use of Arabic scripts to transcribe African languages for secular functions” (p. 92). Communities conversant in Wolof (the dominant language in Senegal) and Pulaar (widely spoken in West Africa), were able to use this literate culture as an effective means of record keeping, documenting literary writings, and public communication, as well as private and personal forms of communication. Nevertheless, Ajami was a ‘Restricted Literacy’ (Saul, 2006) available to few Africans, who themselves travelled within communities to offer their services as mobile scribes and record keepers.

In light of the above, it was therefore pragmatic for SSA communities to identify as Muslims given the benefits that could be reaped. Therefore, by the 11<sup>th</sup> century, through conversions as a result of these contacts with merchant-scholars and individuals seeking refuge in SSA from wars in Muslim lands, Islam became integrated into the spiritual, sociocultural, economic and political life of societies and communities in pre-colonial SSA. Although contacts were initially established with local rulers, Islam gradually filtered to the general populations, becoming a distinct entity given its adaptation to local cultural contexts resulting in Islam with a particular African flair (Trimingham 1962).

## **Pre-colonial Epistemology**

A pre-colonial individual was born and raised in a small village milieu surrounded by people with connections of blood relationships, lineage, clan, language and extended ties of kinship. These relationships were integral in maintaining reciprocal ritual, social and economic obligations. Land, for example was a communal property that could not be bought or sold and was tilled collectively.

In pre-colonial SSA societal structures as detailed by Snelson (1974) and Nsamenang (2005), marriage for example was a contractual agreement between two families and not between individuals. Children belonged to the whole community and not exclusive to a biological family. Thus, the community was responsible for upbringing, a fulfilment of the African proverb “it takes a whole village to raise a child.” Community members were expected to bestow respect for elders as well as to obey the laws of the land. It was also imperative to subordinate one’s individual interest to that of the wider community as well as show understanding and appreciation of social responsibilities

This was because in this environment, survival was paramount, and so individuals and by extension communities had to live in harmony with the physical environment. An effective system of division of labor on the basis of one’s age, gender and particular skillsets ensured the production of food, either through hunting-gathering, fishing or farming; production of gold, ivory, iron, kola nuts; manufacturing of crafts and other items that can be bartered with other communities and effective fighting to avert hostile takeovers from other communities or to conquer new territories. Physically and demanding activities were reserved for the males whilst females were focused on training

that ensured the smooth running of the home. In general, boys were expected to continue their fathers' legacy by following in the professional footsteps of their fathers.

Precolonial or traditional education grew out of this environment. Survival entailed adaptation to the environment, therefore community members needed to be educated into the laws, moral principles obligation to ancestral spirits, to relatives and to others in groups or tribe (Mwanakatwe, 1974; Wangoola, 2002).

Following the old age tradition, precolonial SSA like preceding and succeeding societies alike also used education as a sociocultural mechanism to pass on the various prevailing sociocultural factors to succeeding generations. As such, SSA education process, according to Hamilton & Asiedu (1987), Woolman, (2001), and Gbikpi-Benissan (2011), was intrinsically embedded within the sociocultural, artistic, historic, religious and recreational life of community building. The ultimate aim was the cultivation of individuals who from birth to adulthood would be inculcated into the attitudes and values that characterize his/her population. In other words, according to Bray et al (1986), this education reflected the values, wisdom and expectations of the community or wider society, as a whole. As such, precolonial SSA education produced a complete individual intimately integrated in the community milieu, who was not only respectful, cultured but had also internalized the sensibilities and responsibilities to the society of belonging. These are important acquisitions that facilitated the symbiotic relationship between the individual and their communities in order to guarantee his/her role within it for mutual survival (Majasan 1967; Omolewa, 2007).



An example of such acculturation was the sense of respect for the hierarchy of age, the esteem and reverence placed on the elders within a community. Respect and subordination to the leadership of elders was due for a variety of reasons. These included their role as repository of communal wisdom and history, as well as the ability to recall and interpret tradition wisely. As such, age was important in the effective guarantor for individual upward mobility as well as a tool to enforce social control in the community (Rwezaura, 1989; Onyeozili, 2012).

### **Pre-colonial Pedagogy**

Education is a prime example where leadership to the elders was conceded in the affairs of the people. Precolonial pedagogy was determined by elders of the community; they acted as framers of, as well as imparters of, curriculum content and as enforcers of discipline. The role of the teacher according to Datta (1984), was to instill the established norms and values to students. The teacher was also held in high regard as a custodian of knowledge and expected to conduct themselves with exemplary behavior for their students to emulate. Students in turn were expected not to engage in extensive questioning neither the content nor the breadth of knowledge of the teacher. Instead, they were to work diligently to grasp the content of what was being taught in order to pass on the knowledge to the younger generation, repeating the education cycle.

Pre-colonial SSA pedagogy was grounded in the sociocultural, economic, political and the physical environment of the community (Keto, 1990, Mosweunyane, 2013). Ndee (2010), for example, describes that archeological information indicates that hunting, war and animal husbandry were important activities amongst precolonial tribes

of present day Tanzania. Therefore, as these jobs were specifically for males, these communities implemented vigorous and rigorous physical and psychological curriculum to ensure that the process of instruction young men had to undergo in their roles as warriors, hunters and herders was adequate and successful. Elements of these training and activities Ndee observes are still present either in their original forms or certain aspects have been incorporated and still practiced either as sports, games and dance in present day. In societies where Islam gained a foothold, for example in present day Northern Nigeria, Islamic practices and principles were effective arbiter of social cohesion as well as exposure to established Islamic scholarship such as astrology, astronomy (Mohamed & Yarinchi, 2013).

**Pedagogical approaches.** The preservation of precolonial epistemologies in SSA took place on the continuum, from informal, non-formal and even in formal learning settings (Nyerere, 1961, Ocitti, 1973) even though education was not institutionalized as in the modern sense. Under these three settings, each community member is exposed to both theoretical and practical training in preparation for their role within the society. In the informal education environment, preservation and transmission of sociocultural factors included imitative play, language, music, dance, art, oral tradition, proverbs, myths, stories, religion, and practical hands-on training (Goura, 2012). These educative devices were carried out repetitively and diligently for effectiveness. Schepera (1938) for example reports that precolonial societies in present day Botswana taught its dominant

values to the young in encrypted songs and messages<sup>28</sup>. Also, tribal historians or griots specialized and continue to specialize in memorizing the history of their people and meticulously teach this to younger apprentices. Furthermore, children could familiarize themselves with their local environ as they engaged in daily tasks within the community<sup>29</sup>. Imitative play also reinforced the gendered specific roles of precolonial SSA; boys engaged in staging mock battle scenes, building huts and engaging in other practical skills according to ability, in preparation for his role as head of the household, whilst girls played at cooking imaginary meals or dolls in readiness for taking care of the household.

Non-formal education prevailed in areas Mbiti (1970) described as functional categories or craftwork and technical skills to include for example blacksmithing, woodworking, masonry and pottery. The type and level of specialization depended on the available natural resources and raw materials available in the neighborhood. Instruction in these functional categories was structured through an apprenticeship system (Atchoarena & Delluc, 2002; Tessier, 2005). Professionals who themselves were former apprentices or who learned the trade via familial legacies were organized according to their specialties. Funte (2015) observed that a dormitory school life existed in precolonial

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<sup>28</sup>These messages remind people of hardships and even death for the sake of the tribe; to be united as a regiment and help one another; to value cattle as a principal source of livelihood, and herd them carefully; to attend public decision-making meetings regularly, to honour and ungrudgingly obey old people and to keep religious practices (Schepera 1938, p. 106).

<sup>29</sup>Boys and girls become acquainted with trees, plants, animals and insects, as well as the dangers and uses of each as they herd livestock with other males or whilst with other women engaged in farming, doing housework respectively.

SSA in that it was a common practice for students to leave their families to reside in their teachers' respective places of study with other students until training was completed. For example, amongst the Nso tribe of present day Cameroon, blacksmithing was taught in a dormitory style manner, particularly in the 'compound' of the master. The teacher received payment for services and students were expected to fulfil certain criteria<sup>30</sup> before they could be considered accomplished and recognized in their field as a blacksmith. The same rules of learning were common for the acquisition of other craft and technical skills. Training in *Ajami* was also carried out through this process in traditional village settings (Diallo, 2012).

Formal education was reserved for those professions that required further and extensive training. These include diplomacy, military training, medicine, religious leaders and other specialized occupations. Amongst the Nupe and Ashanti of West Africa according to Adeyemi & Adeyinka (2003), education was highly specialized with formal modes of transmission instituted. Classes took place at special designated and separate spaces, for example at the king's or chief's palace. Professional teachers were hired and received 'gifts' from parents as payment for their services. The curriculum consisted of a predetermined body of knowledge, in an organized sequence over a period of time, sometimes lasting many years, (p. 434). Celebration for students upon graduation included ceremonial dancing and feasting (Tiberondwa, 1978).

Social and initiation ceremonies were also integral in the formal education system in precolonial SSA. These ceremonies were cultural devices used as effective

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<sup>30</sup>Students had to produce quality products as proof of their proficiency.

socialization tools to acculturate youths into society through succeeding stages of initiation (Seroto, 2011). For example, Kenyatta (1961) informs that the Kikuyu tribe of present day Kenya organizes instructions for members within a specified age-set system. Certain criteria, skill and knowledge relevant to the community must be internalized before individuals can proceed to the next stage. Nevertheless, the culmination of formal education experience in traditional education remains the instructions and eventual initiation ceremony that result in the passage from childhood to adulthood. Although each community used different strategies, this stage of preparing for entering adulthood entailed that a major part of the tribal mythology, accumulated knowledge and skills, and appropriate attitudes were transferred to the young neophytes (Njoki et al, 2015).

Amongst the Bantu speaking peoples of Central and Southern Africa and the African Great Lakes region, harsh tactics and reminders were used to teach courage and endurance (Junod, 1962). In West Africa, some tribes in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone actively encouraged boys to attend four years of training before initiation into the Poro Secret Society. A boy who has not been inducted into this society lacks social standing and pedigree amongst his people (Mazonde 2001). The ceremony to mark one's entrance into adulthood was significantly replete with pomp and spectacle to further impress upon both the new graduate and the community the importance of the process.

In Muslim precolonial communities, formal systems of instruction were established to teach Qur'anic knowledge and spread Islamic scholarship using both Arabic and African languages. In the community setting, schools were established in the mosques. Mazonde, (2001) writes that students memorized and recited verses from the

Qur'an and others were taught to read and write Arabic scripts. Initial formal education was complete upon memorization of parts of the Qur'an and proficiency in reading and writing Arabic. However, those who wished can proceed to further<sup>31</sup> and higher Islamic education at renowned and established universities such as Fez in Morocco, Sankore or Timbuktu, in Mali, Al-Azhar in Egypt, or even in Mecca (Nyanchoga, 2014). Formal Islamic education according to Levtzion & Pouwels (2012) was part of princely education given that kings and chiefs used to send their sons to study with Muslim clerics.

### **African Philosophical Foundations of Education**

I summarize like Ocitti (1973) that the philosophical foundations or principles of African traditional education I detailed above are based on the five basic concepts of preparationism, functionalism, perennialism, communalism and holicism.

The practice of *preparationism* guaranteed that education was geared towards preparing and integrating community members with necessary skills and understanding to function as useful and productive members of their respective community. The ideology of *functionalism* highlights the predominantly utilitarian purpose and role of education. As explained by Sifuna (2008), the skills, knowledge and attitudes were imparted in a participatory and practical manner to allow a seamless transition for engagement in productive activities that are beneficial for society. The principle of *perennialism* dictates that survival and continuation of societies require conservation and transmission of its

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<sup>31</sup>Such as in-depth comprehension of the Qur'an, studies on other sources of Islamic knowledge such as Hadith (that is, the traditions of the Prophet), the rules of grammar, other branches of knowledge, theology, commentaries on the Qur'an, logic and jurisprudence.

values and tradition (Durkheim, 1982). *Communalism* was a lifelong process within which the process of discovery and knowledge production was carried out through interaction with others. African traditional education is replete with examples of activities that emphasize group socialization rather than individualization. Freedom of the individual was completely subordinated to the interests of the clan or tribe and cooperation was preferred to competition. This was done deliberately to strengthen the organic unity of the clan (Sifuna, 2008). Finally, *holisticism*, signified integrating daily life experiences into a single curriculum (Nsamenang, 2005). Within the precolonial SSA context, as per Deweyan principles, the whole process of education was inseparable from life, and learning in the community was grounded in what Ocitta (1973) refers to as multiple learning. Multiple learning entails the acquisition of a variety of transferable and productive skillsets. For example, a specialist in blacksmithing may also possess functional and working knowledge of a farmer's skillset. Furthermore, a fisherman may not only be skilled in catching fish, but also may possess additional knowledge such as building canoes, producing and mending fishing nets, as well as marketing of their catch. Likewise, a woman can transfer her skills from being a housewife, a gardener, and a cook, besides being a caretaker and nurse to her child— basically a jack of all trades and masters of all.

In the above section, I examined the different ways in which precolonial SSA used education as a sociocultural mechanism to fulfill the needs of their societies. The societal framework is fundamental to understanding the relationship between precolonial SSA societies and their institution of education, which in turn determines the contents,

pedagogical approaches and philosophies of education as I have discussed. The organic ways of teaching and learning ensured that the curriculum was passed on to generations, thereby ensuring the survival of many indigenous peoples. Even though these ways of learning and knowing were abruptly and violently interrupted, curtailed and changed by the imperial encounter, many aspects are still prevalent within the sociocultural fabric of the peoples of the continent.

### **Imperial Education**

Imperialism, which I discussed in Chapter 2, entailed the political, economic and socio-cultural domination of a weaker nation or region (periphery) by a stronger and more powerful country or region (center) (Stone, 1987; Young, 2016). In SSA these influences were exerted through formal and informal means. Formal imperialism operated through direct conquest and occupation of territories (colonialism), whilst informal imperialism (neoliberal globalization) involved the subtle and benign political and economic influences on weaker nations or regions. As such, I will discuss colonialism and neoliberal globalization given that both these structures of imperialism had and continue to directly use education as a sociocultural mechanism to guarantee the hegemonic nature of imperialism. Thus, I use the term imperial education to signify the process of education implemented by imperial powers from colonization through this current phase of neoliberal globalization which directly impacts upon the sociocultural realities of SSA societies.

In this section, I examine imperial education by analyzing colonial and postcolonial education processes. This examination will include the various manners and



methods which ensures the successful transmission of the attitude that guarantees the continued diffusion of the imperial project.

### **Colonial Education**

Western European interest in the African continent which began in the 1400s reached its peak in the 1800s. The Spanish and Portuguese had adopted as state doctrine the policy of exploration, proselytizing and monopolizing trade, and were thus the first wave of Western Europeans to engage with SSA (Tofiño-Quesada, 2003; Riberio, 2002). They were quickly followed by Belgium, The Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany who also shared similar ambitions and motivations. As such SSA during this time was replete with traders, missionaries, explorers and state sponsored agents from Western Europe. From the mid-1600s, according to Robinson and Gallagher (1961), the collection of individuals engaged in civilizing, exploring, commercializing and staking claims in Africa, presented considerable friction between European national interests as well as between the different branches of Christianity – Roman Catholics and Protestants – that needed to be resolved. To avoid major conflict between these nations The Berlin Conference of 1844 was the culmination of a series of agreements that formalized the “Scramble for Africa.” The "Scramble for Africa" denotes the invasion, occupation, division, colonization and annexation of African territory by European powers during the period of New Imperialism, between 1881 and 1914. These appropriations were carried out without regard for the socio-economic or political

realities on the ground<sup>32</sup>. Pella (2015) cites that the desire to acquire territories range from “an array of norms and values, from the civilizing mission, to Social Darwinism, to realpolitik concerns with national aggrandizement and economic exploitation” (p. 218)<sup>33</sup>. The Berlin Conference established colonialism as a formal mechanism of imperialism. Imperial powers now embarked on a new phase of consolidation by instituting colonial administrations that would maintain social order and provide economic benefits for the imperial nations.

During the process of establishing formal colonial rule within the territories of their respective countries, the missionaries and the collection of individuals as identified by Robinson and Gallagher above, unified in their common purpose cooperated with each other and thus forged very close working relationships (Okun, 2014). Missionaries in some instances had to rely on traders for funds to further their mission projects. Traders and merchants for example, had to rely on reinforcements from their home government in their encounters with hostile local inhabitants as they sought to physically implement the agreements of the Berlin Conference. Likewise, as waves of European missionaries ventured further to the interior of the continent seeking to convert African and to spread European culture, they depended on the colonial government for physical security and protection, even sometimes urging their home governments to engage in punitive military

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<sup>32</sup>As such, by 1914 through various treaties and agreement between the parties, all of Africa with borders clearly demarcated without consideration for the physical reality on the ground except Ethiopia (which had resisted Italian colonization attempts) and Liberia had not been colonized. (See Figs. 4).

<sup>33</sup>See Figure 3.

expeditions against recalcitrant communities to the message of the missionaries (Bohannon and Curtin, 1971). Sometimes, the relationships missionaries had subsequently cultivated with local tribes were used as tools to diffuse tensions between these tribes and colonial administrators. In other words, the connections established between missionaries and Africans were means to pacify Africans to accept the dictate of the colonial government, thereby avoiding military confrontations (Allen, 2013).

**Colonial epistemology.** As the needs of the colonial machine grew, it became necessary to train Africans to fill certain low-level positions within the colonial administration. This entailed cultivating a particular kind of human resources or labor force that can be utilized fully to fulfil imperial ambitions (Omolewa, 2007; Federici, et al, 2000; Gbikpi-Benissan, 2011). Another inherent aspect of imperialism is the ‘civilizing’ mission or “*la mission civilisatrice*.” Both missionaries and colonial administration were convinced of the inherent backward and primitive nature of Africans and wanted to instill good moral character in the Africans. Particularly, the missionaries’ primary aim was to save the souls of Africans they considered pagans and infidels and therefore wanted to teach literacy skills “so converts could read the Bible in their village setting or be trained for the role of the pastor-teacher and catechist to spread the gospel in new places” (Delpit, 2006, p.80). Colonialism, according to the imperialist was therefore a necessary endeavor given its potential to civilize and uplift the inferior African peoples (Ramose, 2004). Under the hegemonic and governance ideologies of assimilation and direct rule (as practiced by the Portuguese and French) or association and indirect rule (as

implemented by the British and Belgians) or apartheid (South Africa),<sup>34</sup> Europeans were engaged in active acculturation of some Africans into the European way of life.

The task of reaching the objectives of colonialism fell in the early years of colonization to Christian missionary bodies, but morphed into a largely conjoint effort by missionaries, colonial government and business owners (Ondigi, 2010; Mutekwe, 2015) as colonization became firmly entrenched in SSA. In tandem, they were subsequently successful in establishing a well-coordinated schooling system by using the institution of education in its role as a sociocultural mechanism for the transmission of culture as well as a means for the acquisition of skills necessary for the functioning of the colonial state (Ball, 1983).

The explicit goal of colonial education was the cultivation of an “indigenous” bourgeois elite minimally educated to act as a buffer between the imperialists and the local community (Moumouni 1968). Spivak (1988) aptly describes this as “a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, [Africans] in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (p. 282). These newly educated Africans were according to Sanda (1972) regarded as “*evolues*” or “Black Frenchmen” in the French and Belgian colonies, “Assimilados” in Portuguese colonies and “African Europeans” or “Been-Tos” in British Africa. The rest of the African population was regarded as still uncivilized savages, backwards and inferior, known for example as ‘*indigenos*’ by the Portuguese colonial machine.

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<sup>34</sup>See Chapter 2, pages 61-62.

**Characteristics of colonial education.** Although the aims of colonial education were similar, the approaches adopted by the imperial powers varied according to various factors. These factors include the attitudes of colonial administrations towards the presence of missionaries, domestic and international circumstances, as well as the perceptions of the civilizing missions of the imperial powers. Nevertheless, education policies were applied in a pragmatic manner in most of the colonies.

Missionaries were generally the pioneers of education in all colonial Africa, whilst on the other hand official education policies at the onset of formal imperialism were as yet not formalized or underdeveloped (Walker-Keleher, 2006; Ottuh, 2015). Mission schools generally emphasized a traditional basic literary, religious ideology, and a curriculum conducive to the civilizing mission. In French West Africa, the first missionary schools were set up in Senegal<sup>35</sup> in 1854, predominantly to train Africans to be clergymen and for conversion purposes. Likewise, according to Ferreira (1974), missionary schools were not only established in the early days of colonization, but members of African nobilities were taken to Portugal both on voluntary and involuntary terms to be trained as Priests and low-level functionaries.

The indirect rule system implemented by the British through a *laissez-faire* decentralized education system in the early days of its colonial imposition granted full administrative freedom for missionaries to chart the course of education (Windel, 2009). The Belgians under King Leopold also actively surrendered education to missionaries. In

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<sup>35</sup>Senegal was the first French colony establish in SSA.

fact, Yates (1980), reports that missionaries were only required by law to teach French in order to establish schools in Belgian colonies. This arrangement was further reified in a treaty with the Vatican in 1906<sup>36</sup>. The Portuguese were simultaneously engaged in expanding the Catholic faith as well as building an imperial empire. Nevertheless, internal political events resulted in various inconsistent policies on the role of Missionaries in educating Africans<sup>37</sup>. In 1926, the Portuguese national dictatorship acceded into power. As a predominantly Catholic party, missionaries regained the privileges and influences they had lost. Particularly, like the Belgians, the new government entered into a treaty with the Vatican in 1940 and in 1941 established the Missionary Statute<sup>38</sup>. These inconsistencies in the Portuguese government's relationship with the missionary establishment were finally subsided by the consequences of WWII when Portugal finally was forced to chart a new policy.

At the end of WWI, the Paris Peace Conference in 1919<sup>39</sup> created The League of Nations. Article 22 of its Charter acknowledged 'the principle of "trusteeship"' and the concept that "the well-being and development" of colonized peoples formed "a sacred

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<sup>36</sup>As part of the treaty, African children were to be taught in French. In exchange, missions would be granted land and permission to operate.

<sup>37</sup>Portugal was proclaimed a republic in 1910. The subsequent law in 1913 declared the separation of Church and State. Religious schools were annexed as lay mission schools.

<sup>38</sup>The Statue handed over the reins of education within Portuguese colonies to missionary groups. The curriculum was based on Christianizing, educational, nationalizing and civilizing roles.

<sup>39</sup>The conference was called to establish the terms of the peace after World War I. About thirty nations were represented. The conference was however dominated by the "Big Four" – Great Britain, the United States, France and Italy.

trust of civilization’’. In other words, imperial powers were virtually trustees of their colonies and that independence can only be granted when colonized peoples were deemed to have sufficiently reached an advanced stage of development. Colonial powers, in the meantime, were to continue in their role as ‘Trustees’ and tutors-in civilization for their colonial subjects until such a time as they could take responsibility for their own self-determination (Sluga, 2006). Edwards (2014) describes this new rationalization of the imperial project as “enlightened imperialism”.

Imperialist powers however had particular agendas and conceptions on the task set out in the Charter on how “to improve the native” (Callahan, 1999). As part of its fulfillment of Trusteeship to their colonies, imperial governments called upon The Phelps-Stokes Commission in 1925<sup>40</sup> to study on ‘Native Education’. Led by its President Jesse Jones<sup>41</sup>, the commission issued a report entitled “Education for Africa” (White, 1996). Although there were specific recommendations for each colony visited, the main thrust of the report advocated that:

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples,.....Its aim should be to render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life, whatever it may be, and to promote

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<sup>40</sup>The Phelps-Stokes is an American philanthropic organization reflecting at that time on the topic of ‘negro education’ in the U.S. Between 1921-24, in the light of the ‘trusteeship’ obligations, representatives were invited to visit and present recommendations on education for seven colonial countries - Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Nigeria, British South Africa, Angola, Belgian Congo, and Liberia.

<sup>41</sup>Jones advocated the ‘manifest destiny’ of the Europeans as well as an advocate of vocationally-oriented education for American blacks, which was then considered as a form of education suited for the blacks’ socio-economic, cultural backgrounds, racial proclivities and intellectual capacities.

the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of agriculture, the development of native industries, the improvement of health,.....to raise the standard alike of character and efficiency of the bulk of the people, but provision must also be made for the training of those who are required to fill posts in the administrative and technical services, as well as of those who as chiefs will occupy positions of exceptional trust and responsibility. As resources permit, the door of advancement, through higher education, in Africa must be increasingly opened for those who by character, ability and temperament show themselves fitted to profit by such education. (Education Policy in British Tropical Africa, 1925 as cited in Mukoboto, 1978, p. 11).

This is, in other words, an education similar to the segregationist education theories that were implemented for African Americans in the U.S. (Ball, 1983; White, 1996 & Omolewa, 2006). Although there were later reforms, the recommendations of The Phelps-Stokes Commission remained the foundation of colonial education<sup>42</sup>.

The British<sup>43</sup>, the Belgians and Portuguese all welcomed this segregated mode of education as the report guidelines presented opportunities to either overhaul current education practices (especially in British territories) as well as to clearly define and implement already established education norms (Duffy, 1962; Windel, 2009; Meewus, 2011). This was so because although in the colonial mindset, independence was only an eventuality in the distant future, there was always the palpable fear that exposure to European education would result in severe disruption of the colonial status quo. The

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<sup>42</sup>For example, French-sponsored Brazzaville Conference in 1944 as well the Report of the Commission for the Modernization of the Overseas Territories in 1948 all proposed slight reforms to the implementation of The Phelps-Stokes Commission.

<sup>43</sup>The Education Committee of the Privy Council to the Colonial Office had released a report in 1847 entitled 'industrial schools for coloured races.' The report was critical of the literary education taught by the missionary schools and the zeal with which the Africans responded to Western education.



British for example feared that the basic education taught by the missionaries was hastening the African mindset towards the colonial economy and thus away from agricultural work to hence “aspire for jobs the administration could not, or did not want to offer” (Wolf, 2008, p. 561). The Belgians also feared the emergence of an African elite class, who would eventually become capable of threatening the colonizer’s authority (Frank, 1927). For the Portuguese on the other hand, the former Portuguese Prime Minister Caetano wrote in 1954<sup>44</sup> that “the blacks in Africa must be directed and organized by Europeans but are indispensable as auxiliaries . . . [and] must be regarded as productive elements organized or to be organized in an economy directed by the whites” (Ferreira, 1974, p. 11). Within this context therefore, the aims and purpose of education were the production of skilled workers but limited in scope in order to avoid the risk of cultivating critical thinking Africans, capable of challenging colonial imposition.

Although the French shared in the above sentiments, they however had a specific vision for their mission of manifest destiny. Cogneau & Moradi (2014) argue that the French’s intention was to build an empire predominantly through military and cultural conquest and as such creating ‘*evolues*’ and Black Frenchmen, in its African colonies. Education was soon recognized and used effectively in its role as an effective transmitter to facilitate the assimilation of Africans into the French culture. By 1857, secular schools were also set up by the French government to train interpreters and clerks for the colonial

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<sup>44</sup>Marcello Caetano (overthrown in April 1974), was former Portuguese Prime Minister. He recorded his position during his tenure as professor in the University of Coimbra, Portugal.

machine (Clignet, & Foster, 1964; White, 2010). The French government instituted its formal education policy in 1903 with the establishment of the public education system of education, modelled on the education system of Paris to include a system of primary and upper primary schools. Between 1903 and 1924, through various government legislations the government virtually took control of the bulk of education services in its colonies (Garner & Schafer, 2006; White, 2010).

From these perspectives, the provision of, as well as the withholding of, education can only be interpreted as a form of social control exerted by the imperialists over those whom they ruled. The adapted and academic curriculum which came to characterize colonial education and is still in existence in present day SSA has its origins in the apprehension of the imperialists to have a European-educated African elite and ultimate sanctioning of this disquiet by The Phelps-Stokes Commission of 1925.

**Colonial pedagogy.** Imperialism and education in colonial SSA are inextricably linked in a complex and interrelated relationship that can best be understood within the dynamics inherent in the societal framework I presented above. As such, the nature and content of colonial pedagogy in SSA was primarily a reflection of the culture, needs and ideology of its framers (Baylies & Bujra, 1990). Colonial education was to fit within these motivations of the colonial state, a mixture of commerce, evangelization and civilization of Africans into the European way of life. In this way, the “African learner thus had no hope of learning or acquiring skills of immediate relevance to the community” (Ofori-Attah, 2006, p. 412). Colonial pedagogy was offered through the

model of the adapted and academic curriculums as well as the evangelic or pacifist curriculum.

***The adapted and academic curriculum.*** Integral to the Phelps-Stokes report in 1925 was the priority placed on the differentiation of education between the two ‘classes’ of Africans it identified. In this way, the adapted curriculum was intended for the masses or the ‘*non-evolves*,’ – the ‘*indígenos*’ and the native Africans. The adapted curriculum was transferred to its recipients in formal and non-formal environments. Formal schooling consisted of schools that were purposely established in village and or rural settings. Education was basic, characterized by the obligatory teaching of the four R’s – reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. Vocational and technical education occurred in non-formal schooling. Africans who attended these schools were trained in the current European technology. Graduates of these institutions were the workforce that provided the manual labor to ensure the cycle of production by constructing roads, bridges, mining, agriculture, buildings and other infrastructure necessary for the colonial project (Cooper, 1981). Local languages were either banned or could be used only on a temporary basis in order to meet immediate pedagogical requirements of the adapted curriculum; for example, to ensure that Christian principles were thoroughly imparted to Africans (Mokubotu, 1978; Franknema, 2012). Education and training thus, at this level, were characterized as low-level and were intended to meet the limited need for semiskilled workers in colonial bureaucracies. An education which Foster cited in Ball (1983) describes as one grounded in the development of "habits of steady industry" leading to a "settled and thriving peasantry" (p.244).

The academic curriculum on the other hand focused on the formation of the African leadership class and constituted of a more advanced education. Students who were considered academically capable<sup>45</sup> as well children of kings and other noble families were educated in formal settings. Boarding schools as a deliberate policy of detachment of individuals from the traditional milieu was according to Sanda (1972) the preferred environment for colonial formal education. The colonialists believed that long stints away from traditional cultural influences would engender students to become completely immersed and easily enculturated into the European value system. The curriculum was completely devoid of African content<sup>46</sup>, but replicated the curriculum of the corresponding home country. Thus, subjects such as history, geography, literature were taught entirely from a Eurocentric perspective<sup>47</sup>. At the university level, the academic structures instituted were also consistent with that of their home countries<sup>48</sup> (Nyanchoga, 2014). Furthermore, in the absolute eventuality that students had to complete study abroad, they were mostly limited to doing so in their partner universities

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<sup>45</sup>Those students who successfully fulfilled the criteria set up in the village and rural school settings.

<sup>46</sup>The sociocultural factors of Africans according to the imperialists were backward, pagan and evil, and that African history started with the arrival of the Europeans.

<sup>47</sup>For example, history books used by Africans in French colonies started with the phrase ‘our ancestors the Gauls.....’.

<sup>48</sup>Curriculum, examinations and conferring of degree were all regulated by the corresponding European university.

in either Anglophone, Francophone or Lusophone equivalent<sup>49</sup> in order to maintain control of education.

The language of instruction at the academic curriculum level was strictly limited to the colonizers' language. Only students who had sufficiently grasped the mechanisms of the European language taught could advance into the higher level of education. In this way, learners were forced to give preference to the new language if they were to proceed academically. wa Thiongo (1988) describes the discarding and denuding the Africans of access to their language as "the cultural bomb". That is, language as a carrier of culture, oral traditions and through which Africans made sense of communities and which was of utmost value in precolonial SSA was not only relegated and insidiously replaced, but continues to replicate the colonial mindset even in post-colonial SSA. Both the adapted and academic curriculum therefore served to continuously reiterate and remind the Africans of the inferiority of their precolonial communities as compared with the military, scientific, technical, sociocultural, economic and political superiority of the Europeans (Gifford & Louis 1971; Chafer, 2002).

***Imperial attempts to control access to education.*** The control of access to education was achieved through a pyramid shaped manner. Mass education at the adapted curriculum level was structured for minimal exposure of Africans to colonial influences, but still enough to create a shift in culture and attitudes whilst access to higher or further education was restricted and entailed a deeper integration and acculturation of Africans

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<sup>49</sup>The imperial administrations were keen not to expose Africans to the influences of the black liberation theological movement that was gaining ground in the U.S. under the iconic figure of Booker T. Washington.

within the European society. Yet still, there was a wide variety of uneven application of the curriculum according to the pragmatic needs of the imperial power (D ‘Adamo, 2012).

The British for example according to Brown (1964), implemented a “two-handed policy” (p. 370) of education. In settler controlled colonies in East and Central Africa, a mostly adapted curriculum was implemented. Elementary schools as well as technical schools were opened, but however, by 1939, there were still no secondary schools available for Africans (Gray 1960). Education in West African colonies on the other hand was slightly more academic in nature<sup>50</sup>. By 1930 a limited system of secondary education had developed in Nigeria; Achimota College was established in Ghana as a hybrid of a technical and agricultural college as well as an academic learning center and Fourah Bay College in Sierra became affiliated with the University of Durham in 1876 to serve as the main university for the entire western coast (Corby 1990).

Assimilation through language into the French, Belgian and Portuguese cultures was the foundation of education. For the Belgians, catholic missionaries in charge of a significant portion of colonial education were convinced that higher education was to be reserved for those of their colonial subject entering the priesthood. This perspective resulted in instituting the adapted curriculum to the neglect of the academic curriculum. In practice, manual and agricultural education was the prevalent mode in all levels of

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<sup>50</sup>The Europeans in the settler colonies were unwilling to allow Africans access to education fearing to jeopardize their favored position. Whilst the Africans in West Africa demanded education as it enabled them to access gainful employment within the expanding commercial and government sectors of the colonial economy.

education as a focus on academics would result in Africans considering themselves above manual labor. In Congo, for example, although basic primary education was available, access to agricultural, technical training and secondary education was still however limited (Ponomarev, 1959; Dupape, 2015). The first pre-university students were admitted into Louvain University<sup>51</sup> and full university courses commenced in 1956. At independence, Congo under the Belgian 75 years colonial rule had only produced 16 indigenous graduates<sup>52</sup> out of its population of more than thirteen million (Kimble, 1960; Kiwanuka 1970).

Portugal's brand of imperialism was according to Anderson (1962) "the most extreme and the most primitive modality of colonialism" (p.97), given that the methods of resource extraction in its colonies were far more exploitative than other colonial powers. This 'ultracolonialism' is contradictory to the official policy of assimilation they professed, and its selective and restricted educational practices in its African colonies were further testament to this fact. Duffy (1962) in analyzing the dictatorship of Salazar's dictatorship which assumed power in 1926 confirms the unchanged nature of Portuguese colonial education, which did not place a particular emphasis on the development of an elite class, but was, however, creating a class of semi-literate, hardworking, devout and conservative catholic Africans. As such, mission schools were preoccupied with mass

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<sup>51</sup>The first university in the Belgian Congo.

<sup>52</sup>There were no Congolese engineers or physicians.

rudimentary primary education (*ensino primário rudimentar*) that provided agricultural labor. For example, in Angola, rural schools were linked to farms (or *granjas administrativas*). Agricultural schools such as (*escola Agropecudriu*) of Tchivinguiro were also established to support intensive cultivation projects. Access to secondary schools was severely limited and higher education was virtually inaccessible to Africans. The census of 1950 reflects this neglect of education with its report that 99% of Africans were officially illiterate (Anderson, 1962).

In the wake of the liberation movements that were gathering pace in all the colonized African territories, some reforms were implemented in the 1960s. According to Ferreira (1974), access to both primary and secondary schools was expanded. Likewise, the University of Angola and the Lourenço Marques in Mozambique which were initially branches of the Portuguese university system were granted degree awarding status. Nevertheless, post primary education was still restricted for most Africans and the curriculum for all levels of education were still heavily concentrated on agricultural, technical and occupational studies to produce skilled labor for the colony.

The French strategy was focused on the delicate balance between assimilation and association models of governance. They instituted various reforms in the adapted and academic curriculum in order to ensure this balance, creating a dual education system that was quantitatively and qualitatively limited and elitist (Chafer, 2001). African schools were to educate the masses whilst European schools were more selective, and tasked with identifying, separating and developing the capabilities of the most talented ensuring their evolution as 'Black Frenchmen.' Schools for example consisted of village, regional and



urban schools. As explained by White (1996), the village schools were in the African category of schools, adapted to the African conditions with a particular emphasis on basic education, agriculture and artisanal training. Progress from the village to regional schools was determined by one's abilities (Huillery, 2006 & Chafer, 2001). Regional schools however, were fewer in number were considered transitional with a mixture of manual and vocational training. Finally, urban schools were almost entirely European, following closely the French structure and curriculum. These were the students who were streamed to advance even to attend and obtain university degrees at universities in France (Huillery, 2006). As 'Black Frenchmen,' these educated elites were accorded as discussed by Bunche (1934) certain rights and privileges of French citizenship<sup>53</sup>.

Nevertheless, from the perspective of the Africans, fluency in European languages as well as other skills acquired in colonial schooling enabled them to access gainful employment within the expanding commercial and government sectors of the colonial economy. As such, Africans identified and valued education as a source of individual social and financial mobility as well as an escape from the harsh realities of rural living. Therefore, restriction of access to education was very unpopular and sparked mass controversy amongst Africans to colonial rule. Another critique and resistance to colonial education was the neglect of the precolonial African presence in the curriculum. Africans such as Sierra Leonean James Johnson as well as Liberian Edward Blyden were most

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<sup>53</sup>Africans including former Presidents Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal), Houphoët Boigny (Côte d'Ivoire), Sékou Touré (Guinea), Lamine Blaise Diagne (Deputy of Senegal) were members of the French colonial government and national assembly.

vocal. They both argued that such deliberate omission was detrimental in terms of maintaining the African dignity, self-respect and the preservation of indigenous African knowledge (Woolman, 2001). Sustained discontentment over the education policy marked the impetus for the independence struggle by Africans in the 1950s and 1960s in some parts of colonial SSA (Windell, 2009).

***The pacifist evangelical curriculum.*** As an exploitative system, imperialism/colonialism can only survive if it can reorient the sociocultural factors inherent in its target population into the mental and cultural universe of the colonizer. In other words, as described by Anderson (1962), it required the domestication of the indigenous population, which guaranteed complete subjugation and domination of the indigenes. As I mentioned previously, missionaries and colonial government (including the most de-christianized) were engaged in a symbiotic relationship in reaching their goals of colonialism. Even though colonial education eventually transformed into a joint effort, missionary activities were instrumental in both the early and later stages to inculcate the aims of the ‘civilizing’ mission or “*la mission civilisatrice*” and were according to Pawliková-Vilhanová (2007) the first and most important facet of Western contact.

Central to the evangelic curriculum was the importance of conveying to African peoples that the imperialist presence in their native land was to their benefit and to uplift them from a state of barbarism in which Africans existed before European contact. Therefore, the precolonial value system was systematically deemphasized and eroded<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup>Traditional systems such as marriage, rituals, songs, dance, art, literature, were all condemned.

Assimilated Africans facilitated the process described by Awolalu (1991) and Khapoya (2012), whereby Africans were encouraged to directly confront and flout their indigenous symbols of authority as exemplified by the breaking of taboos and burning of ritual objects. On the other hand, Africans were gradually given a new identity by requiring those students in schools to adopt Christian names and new cultural patterns, including regular church attendance as well as Christian moral and ethical codes.

The spiritual message stressed that the temporary nature of life on earth must best be used to prepare for the eternal life after death. In order to achieve eternal life, one must therefore learn to exercise Christian virtues of patience, submission and forgiveness. According to Rodney (1972), missionaries “could be relied upon to preach turning the other cheek in the face of exploitation, and they drove home the message that everything would be right in the next world (p. 278). That is, although the experiences of Africans during colonialism were humiliating and caused much pain and suffering, these were all ennobling and spiritual cleansing rites that would be rewarded in the afterlife. The following saying attributed to Jomo Kenyatta<sup>55</sup> as stated in Khapoya (2012) is well-known amongst Africans: “when Europeans came to Africa, they had the Bible and the African had the land. They gave the Bible to the African and told him to hold it in his hand, close his eyes, and pray. When the African opened his eyes, he had the Bible and the European had his land” (p. 103).

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<sup>55</sup>The first President of Kenya.

Therefore, the evangelical pacifist curriculum as well as the adapted and academic curriculum succeeded in cultivating a class of Africans that were alienated from their cultural practices, (Achebe, 1959), minimally exposed to European thoughts and mores (Anderson, 1962) and therefore ultimately incapable of surmounting genuine or sustained rebellion that could alter the trajectory of the SSA continent. This enduring status quo was inherited by the apparatus of neoliberal globalization, which, as I will examine in the next section, continues to be sustained even in current times.

### **Post-colonial Education or Neoliberal Education**

Decolonization in SSA coincided with the imposition of the globalization of the principles and practices of neoliberalism or neoliberal globalization<sup>56</sup>. To summarize, however, neoliberal globalization according to Van Horn & Mirowski (2009) entails the subduing of all sociopolitical interactions to that of the economic in order to guarantee the flourishing of the markets. That is the premise that human progress, welfare and prosperity can only be maximized and enhanced through an imposed system based on private property, free market, free trade, and enterprenueriaial freedoms. Proponents reason that eliminating bureaucracy will increase competition and thus efficiency in the delivery and production of goods and services. In particular, education within the neoliberal framework is not a means to cultivate democratic citizens, but rather is viewed as any other commodity that can be traded for profit and thus be delivered to those who can afford to pay for it, as well as an effective modem of cultivating a neoliberal mindset within the population (Giroux, 2011).

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<sup>56</sup>See Chapter 2 for my reference on neoliberal globalization.

The role of government in a neoliberal state according to Harvey (2005) is to ensure an institutional framework conducive to the practical implementation of the theories inherent in neoliberalism. Further still, “if markets do not exist (in areas such as land, water, education, health care, social security, or environmental pollution) then they must be created, by state action if necessary” (p.2). Within the realm of education, the neoliberal state apparatus has indeed created processes to subdue the global education system to the neoliberal paradigm. Bowles and Gintis (1976) refer to these processes as the neo-liberal profit oriented economic policies, which I term, like Giroux (2011), the neoliberal pedagogy.

**The neoliberal pedagogy.** According to neoliberalism, education like all societal interactions must be made subservient to the dictates of market principles. Giroux (2011) refers to the corresponding pedagogical model adopted and globally diffused within the institution of education as the neoliberal pedagogy. Giroux (2011) furthermore expands that the proliferation of the neoliberal pedagogy is not only restricted to institutions of learning but is legitimized and reinforced in the wider public domain through new sites of learning or a medium of ‘cultural apparatus’ (Mills in Giroux, 2011) or what Althusser (1971) calls the ideological State Apparatus (ISAs).<sup>57</sup> Giroux names these confluences of teaching sites as the neoliberal public pedagogy.

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<sup>57</sup>These mechanisms include institutions such as political parties, cultural ventures, churches, education systems, the media, corporate board rooms and International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

The urgency for a neoliberal public pedagogy has foundations in the antiwar and civil rights political movements of the 1960s. The mobilization of previously apathetic and passive populations was of great concern to the wealthy and powerful economic ruling class (Davies & Bansel, 2007). Neoliberalism was on the ascendancy and this group of financial elites felt that such radicalization was a threat to an eventual adoption of the principles of neoliberalism within democratic societies where citizens can voice dissent. The “Report on Governability” by Crozier *et al* (1975)<sup>58</sup> argued that democratic citizens must be made both more governable by curtailing their power and active participation within society so they can become more amenable to service capital and imperial interests. The report cited those “value-oriented intellectuals” who might challenge and expose government policies they believe are detrimental to society as well as independent media and journalists most likely to align with “the cause of humanity” as in need of special control (Sklar, 1980, p. 39). As such, the public services and the use of education as a sociocultural mechanism were identified as the most effective tools to address the governance concerns of the elite (Davies, 1996). Indeed, the adoption of the neoliberal pedagogy is another example of the culmination of neoliberalism’s ‘long march’ through institutions that its founding fathers had envisaged (Harvey, 2005).

The ultimate aim of neoliberal pedagogy as a sociocultural mechanism is to ensure the dominant ideology is inherited by subsequent generations and processed in

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<sup>58</sup>The report was commissioned by the Trilateral Commission a non-governmental, non-partisan discussion group, founded by David Rockefeller in July 1973, to foster closer cooperation among North America, Western Europe, and Japan.

ways that results in its best being able to serve capitalist imperialism. Giroux (2011) summarizes this as education that is rooted in “commercialization, commodification, privatization and militarization of education” (p. 12). In other words, the private sector has always depended on the institution of education particularly at the higher levels to produce individuals capable of contributing to solving current problems through the influence of either curricula or research programs (Grineski, 2000), but albeit with a semblance of separation between these two entities. However, with the dawn of neoliberalism, the principles of the free marketism mentality have gradually encroached into the core mission of education and has successfully transformed teaching and learning into “just another way to generate profits (i.e., commercialization) through producing and selling courses, teaching materials, and curricula (i.e., commodification)” (Grineski, 2000, p. 22). The institution of education has been transformed like other areas in society as a tool to prepare students to fit into the existing neoliberalism global paradigm.

In this current compromised state of the role and functions of education, the neoliberal pedagogy has multiple contours and representations. One of these is to guarantee the production of 21<sup>st</sup> century skilled labour that will promote economic growth and cultivate an international competitive workforce. As such, schools must equip students “with appropriate habits and skills necessary for their integration into different occupational structures” based on their skills and abilities ((Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p.227). To ensure the creation of an ideal neoliberal subject, learning is imparted within a much narrow standardized form of pedagogy that highlights a mechanistic and

behavioristic view of learning based on rote learning, memorization, and with particular emphasis on competition and high-stakes testing.

Furthermore, situating education within the language of free marketism of neoliberalism has veered the institution of education from its traditional mindset to one that is reflective of a “transnational corporation and techno bureaucratic structure .... in pursuit of increasing contribution to economic growth, measured exclusively in ‘commodity and money’ units...education by way of supply and demand, the regulation of the market of educational services and competing suppliers of services” and “demanding consumers” (Karpov, 2013, p. 81). This business model of education changed the conceptions of not only the nature and definitions of knowledge, learning, education and schooling, but also the relationships and perceptions between and amongst the institution of education itself, teachers and students.

In the once ‘quasi-sacred spaces’ (Klein, 1999) of higher education for example, the hegemonic market-driven ideology is redefining the relationship between corporate culture and higher learning institutions. In return for funding, corporations and the national security state are able to impose, in accordance to their interests and preferences, the parameters and frameworks that for instance guide research, hiring of faculty, as well as academic disciplines and programs offered in universities. These practices are in fact reminiscent of a gradual morphing of the university “into a training ground for the corporate workforce” (Giroux, 2011, p. 111). In addition, the administering of universities is being gradually modelled on corporate management practices as signified by an over reliance on the language of excellence, contracting and outsourcing non-



academic services to private entities, seeking sponsorships for brand-name corporations and engaging in cost-cutting procedures.

Also, teachers are denied the creative participation and input in the education process. These disempowered and deskilled educators are expected to follow the dictates of a top down developed teacher proof curriculum which relegates them to merely instructors mainly responsible as transmitter of knowledge, or in the language of the market they are “deliverers of the product”, they ‘operationalize delivery’, and ‘facilitate clients’ learning” (Hill, 2003, p. 39). At the university level, there is also the expectation that each department must somehow contribute to the profitability and success of the organization (Kwiek 2003), leading to what Tuchman, (2010) describes as the audit culture, whereby faculty are engaged in a meaningless commensuration process of productivity by policing themselves on numbers of academic publications, speaking engagements, expenditure and income all without reference to individual intellectual contributions. In the words of Giroux (2011), “they have become another reserve army of cheap laborers, a workforce that can be eagerly exploited in order to raise the bottom line whilst disregarding the rights of academic labor and the quality of education that students deserve” (p. 10).

Within this new educational phenomenon, students on the other hand are rendered as consumers, customers and clients in institutions of learning. As suppliers, educational institutions are in competition with each other and as such must put in place attractive and competitive choices of learning packages to attract a wide range of students. Choices can include according to Fischetti et al (1998) a modified academic calendar with

convenient class schedules and locations, minimal curricula that requires far less classroom time, and a major focus on customer service and quality management. In this supermarket of education, students develop a “mall mentality” of casually “cruising” curricular and co-curricular offerings (Klein, p. 98), and selecting ‘modules’ on a pick’n’mix basis (Hill, 2003). From this consumer-driven philosophy, the educational process is just another commodity that is purchased through a commercial transaction with expected rates of return, which as described by Schwartzman (2013) is “measured crudely by comparing the cost of acquiring a degree (tangible certification of “product” acquisition) with the financial earnings the degree supposedly enables” (p. 2). In other words, in return for tuition payment, students gain necessary knowledge and skillsets and a certified degree that guarantees access to a lucrative career.

Such a cultivation of neoliberal subject as consumers lays the foundation for another aspect of the neoliberal pedagogy, the role and status of the individual. The status of the individual surrendered to the neoliberal market principles is one who possesses an apparent unlimited independence and freedom to make choices that privileges individualism as opposed to the wider social considerations. The reality, however, is that this unbridled freedom can only really be exercised within the economic sphere where individuals have the freedom to consume and make choices to that effect. This economic freedom prepares the ‘neoliberal self’ for their role in society as the successful entrepreneur, sovereign consumer and hard-working taxpayer (McGuian, 2014).

This neoliberal self (McGuian, 2014) embraces individualism as a sign of personal freedom, but is also ironically an individual tightly governed, especially within the political sphere, who must ultimately succumb to market principles. Nonetheless, as free individuals with responsibility for our own destinies, an inability to survive within this marketism paradigm is considered a personal failure (Davies & Bansel, 2007). The reason for this failure is not attributed to the inequalities within the market system itself, but is due to a genetic and racialized defect and those individuals who do not conform to the expected norms and rules of neoliberalism are looked upon with distrust and suspicion. Within this culture of cruelty, survival of the fittest is paramount, and thus, in order to succeed, individuals must be constantly engaged in active competition with other individuals, showcasing their unique talents and abilities. Therefore, within this context, the student as a consumer is investing in a commodity (education) with the understanding that it is a race to the top that will eventually yield high financial return.

Critical theorists and scholars of education have been highlighting the negative consequences and repercussions on this model of neoliberal free market pedagogy and its negative effects on the learning process. Nevertheless, it has continued its hegemonic hold not only in Western countries, but has been diffused at all levels of education in various part of the world under the guise of globalization. Particularly, in SSA, the policies of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) are being conjointly, but sequentially used to diffuse and promote this neoliberal pedagogy in the region.

**The neoliberal pedagogy within the SSA context.** Within SSA, neoliberal globalization became a hegemonic presence as a result of debt crisis. Servicing debt repayments resulted in the restructuring of the economies of the nations of SSA through the imposition of the conditions that were foundational to Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). The SAPs were implemented according to neoliberal principles in two phases according to Harrison (2010). The initial initiation phase included the removal of subsidies for education and other social services. As subsidies were replaced with user fees or charges, access and quality declined in all levels of education within SSA. For example, governments became unable to fulfil their obligations to provide basic education for their citizens. Most drastically however as stated by Brock-Utne (2003) and Lulat (2005) was the view disseminated by the IFIs that tertiary and higher education were a luxury and therefore a hindrance to the national development goals within the continent and must therefore be eliminated or restructured.<sup>59</sup> Mazrui (1997) reports approximately 2,000 from a total body of 6,000 students were deregistered in May of 1996 due to non-payment of financial obligations. Konings (2011) supports Mazrui with a detailed account of violent staged protests by students in the University of Yaounde in Cameroon, protests in response to the ongoing realities of the virtual defunding of university education.

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<sup>59</sup>The World Bank advocated the closure of universities within SSA nations to be replaced by sending graduates overseas to be trained. This policy was later rescinded due to political untenability. However, the World Bank new restructuring policy for universities was for curriculum to produce graduates with those skills that the “market” demands.

At the second stage, privatization, which had already been implemented in the control of state owned economic enterprises as well as infrastructures (railways, water assets), was subsequently applied to basic service programs like education. As such, all levels of education were opened up to the private sector, giving rise to a global education industry. Grant (2008) refers to these investors as ‘edupreneurs’. These edupreneurs are regarded as saviors of the now defunct and derelict education systems in SSA in urgent need of private cash injection. Missing from the narrative is the fact that the current dilapidated state of education is as a direct result of severe and purposeful neglect by the policies of the IFIs. In SSA, Bridge International Academies (BIA)<sup>60</sup> is an example of an eduprenuer. As stated in its website, BIA was set up in 2008 with plans to educate 10 million children, particularly in low-income families, by 2025. Initially the company started its operations in Kenya and has gradually extended to include, for example, Uganda and Nigeria. In 2016, Liberia announced plans to outsource the country’s entire pre-primary and primary education to the company. According to the contract, the company will initially run a pilot program for 50 schools. BIA will commence mass implementation of Liberia’s basic education over a five-year period (Mungai, 2016). If indeed BIA could take over public school systems in SSA, The Economist (2017) estimates that the worth of the company will increase to \$179 million as contrasted to its current \$64 million.

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<sup>60</sup>A private for profit American company with various investors including Bill Gates, Facebook’s Zuckerberg, LearnCapital the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank, and Britain’s Department for International Development others.

Also, SSA nations in their transition to neoliberal states had to enact legislative measures to formalize privatization and regulation at the higher education level. Edupreneurs were thus able to take advantage of this niche to establish various higher learning institutions. Furthermore, as Varghese (2004) informs, through various ownership and governance models<sup>61</sup> edupreneurs have succeeded in proliferating such institutions in SSA – a total number of 950 as reported by The World Bank (2009), whilst Yolo et al (2005) reports that for example between 1990 and 2005, 20 private universities were established in Nigeria and 35 more were waiting approval.

As part of the global education industry, edupreneurs are not only limited to establishing schools and higher learning institutions, but are actively and integrally involved in curriculum design and implementation. Sancar and Sancar (2012) submit that educational materials are prepackaged and curricula are imposed at all levels of private education in SSA. This is because the prevalence in usage of these ‘learning packages’ result in a higher profit based margin for investors. For example, BIA offers what the company describes as a “school in the box” model. To save costs, learning packages include curriculum which are developed in the USA are then sent electronically on the teachers’ tablets and smart phones. The teacher is mandated to read the lessons to the class. Again, Grant describes this as ‘edubusiness’. The language of these learning

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<sup>61</sup>These models include Transnational - foreign owned private universities operating in SSA. Collaboration with foreign institutions - privately owned higher institutions in Africa that operate in collaboration with foreign institutions. Collaboration with public universities - some private higher institutions have affiliation with some public universities. Religious affiliation - private higher institutions in Africa which are owned and operated by Christian denominations or Muslim organizations.

packages has gradually been transformed to instill the pedagogy of neoliberalism or a neoliberal pedagogy onto its student base.

**Attempts at post-colonial education reform.** Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in December 1948 recognized the right to education as a human rights issue. Although almost all of SSA was still under colonial occupation, Africans however were engaged in vehement internal discussions, opposition and strife over the adapted and academic curriculum implemented by the colonialist regimes. Africans were critical of colonial education citing not only its elitist tendencies, but also its irrelevance to the African indigenous way of life (Ajayi et al., 1996). Indeed, this defiance played an important impetus and initiation of liberation struggle. Thus, at independence, nationalist leaders once opposed to colonial education, but who themselves understood the possibilities of Western education, (given that western education gave them access and recognition as the elites to challenge the colonial structure and to advocate for political independence for their peoples) were now at the political helm in their respective countries. In reacting against the imposed colonial state, they viewed education through the human capitalist theory approach<sup>62</sup>. Therefore, from their perspectives, the process of education was not simply for consumption, but was intended as a product for sustainable national development to realize the dreams of complete and total independence from imperial control.

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<sup>62</sup>According to this theory, one of the most efficient path to the national development of any society lies in the improvement of its population -- its human capital.

Subsequently, at the inaugural conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1961, Okoli (2012) reports that short and long-term plans were established by the 33 African leaders to meet these socio-economic development goals. In the short term, the necessity to provide labour to run state institutions resulted in the urgency to establish public universities, which were still in its infancy stages in most of SSA (Jegede, 2016). In Cameroon for example, the number of university students steadily increased from 35 in 1961 to 41,000 in 1992 (Dang, 2013). In the long term, the leaders envisaged instituting a national system of free and compulsory education that would eventually equalize all levels of education within SSA nations. In 1961 as reported by Nishimura et al (2009), Ghana instituted its Accelerated Development Plan which aimed to expand access to education as did Kenya in 1970. Gross enrollment in Kenya dramatically increased from 47% in 1963 to 115% in 1980.

Nevertheless, the vision for sustainable development as well as the systems of education to achieve these goals were solely based on Europeans models of either socialism (results of alliances with socialist nations during independence struggles) or capitalism (inherited as result of colonialism). Nationalist leaders such as envisaged an African system of education grounded in the African context. For example, President Nyerere of Tanzania initiated the policy of Education for Self-Reliance.

However, this first wave of reforms was stalled, held hostage by the conditions attached to the SAPs. As I have discussed above, by the 1980s, education at all levels in SSA was unsustainable as a result of economic and financial realities faced by SSA nascent leaders. Parents were forced to assume the financial responsibilities for schooling



and thus the African led goals of establishing, for example, Education for Self-Reliance was terminated not only in Tanzania, but in all of SSA (Ochwa-Echel, 2013).

The second wave of education reforms was spurred by the failure of the SAPs, in particular the recognition that it's the macro-economic did not yield the intended results in SSA. The focus of the IFIS shifted to poverty reduction and human well-being as central objectives of sustainable development. In echoing African liberation leaders' theories on the role of education in SSA, the IFIS universally reaffirmed education not only as a human issue, but also its crucial role as a tool of sustainable development and advancement of human welfare. As such, several international conferences and summits initiated by the IFIS took place to reiterate the importance and the right of education<sup>63</sup>. The first conference held in Jomtein, Thailand in 1990 launched the Education for All (EFA) initiative, which aimed to "provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults" (UNESCO). All SSA nations were required to institute policies of Universal Primary Education (UPE)<sup>64</sup> in order to reach the EFA goals. The international community reconvened ten years late in Dakar, Senegal. The consensus was that although some achievements were made (for example, by 1998 42% of African primary children were out of school and by 2000, 39% were still out of school, (Okoli, 2012)). In other words,

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<sup>63</sup>The use of slogans such as "The Right to Education"; 'Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights and 'education is a basic right and a requirement for national development' became prevalent amongst the IFIS, Amnesty International, OXFAM and other NGOs.

<sup>64</sup>The policy of free and compulsory education, similar to what independence leaders envisaged in the immediate post-colonial era.

the overall goals of EFA remained elusive. Members reaffirmed their commitment to the goals of EFA and they became enshrined as Goal 2 in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>65</sup> which was anticipated to be reached by 2015. Unfortunately, SSA nations were again unable to make the deadline in instituting the EFA. In the EFA meeting held in New York in 2015, The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>66</sup> was adopted as the new vehicle within which EFA is envisaged to be attained by 2030.

The EFA is being lauded, on one hand, given that its provisions have indeed augmented enrollment rates as well as guaranteed access to education for a whole segment of population in SSA (Heyneman, 2009). For example, as Ssewamala et al (2011) informs, including orphans and children from poor households, enrollment rate at the primary school level in Uganda doubled from 3.1 million in 1996 to 7.5 million in 2007.

However, on the other hand, its scope and quality remain amongst some of the deeply contested issues enacted by the EFA reforms as enshrined in now SDGs. Firstly, the EFA is reminiscent of colonial education as well as the original dictates of the SAP given that it only prioritizes basic and primary education as the foremost and genuine area of need in SSA, thereby relegating the system of tertiary and higher education (Samoff & Carrol 2004). Such neglect of higher education has significant negative consequences for economic and sustainable development of any nation, given that the

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<sup>65</sup>MDG No. 2 - To achieve Universal Primary Education.

<sup>66</sup>SDG No. 4 aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

knowledge and skillsets required to run state as well as private institutions cannot be acquired by just access to basic primary education.

A further critique of the EFA is that SSA nations are so preoccupied with the ‘one dimensional view of education’ (Hyneman, 2009, p. 4), that is meeting their respective enrollment targets in their UPEs, to the detriment of other areas that comprises the EFA, in this case access to a free, but quality education. SSA governments still burdened with debt repayments and lack of financial resources still encounter challenges in meeting their goals of absolute implementation of the UPEs. In highlighting this lack of quality Dang (2013) references the experiences of Cameroon. Although UPE was declared in 2000, compulsory education was neither mandated nor enforced given the government’s inability to meet its financial obligations. Therefore, education was not completely free; in some cases parents had to pay school fees and were responsible for books, uniforms and other sundries. Also, learning institutions functioned at substandard or inadequate facilities with minimum support to encourage independent learning. Qualified and experienced teachers are scarce compounded with low salaries and inferior working conditions. Further still, parents must contribute to building physical structures to house and equip schools, all factors that undermine the provision of quality education for Africans. It is therefore not surprising that Jerald (2009) in a report on behalf of the World Bank supports that a significant number of students in SSA complete school without having acquired or mastered basic skills.

Another most significant, if mostly overlooked, criticism is that of the transformation of curricula that aligns with the epistemological paradigm of indigenous

African knowledge. Indeed, nationalist leaders were vehemently opposed to what Etieyibo (2016) refers to as “‘knowledge hegemony’ of the imperial system and envisaged an ‘*Africanized curriculum*’, that picks out salient features or characteristics, experiences, practices, beliefs, values, and ways of life that are representative and distinctive or peculiar to sub-Saharan Africans” (p.405). SSA education personnel engaged in several meetings and conferences<sup>67</sup> on curriculum reform which eventually established in 1976 The African Curriculum Organization (ACO) with national curriculum development offices located in different countries of SSA. Indeed, in the immediate post-colonial period of the 1960s, African countries made significant advances in Africanizing their curriculum, but these efforts were hindered by the advent of the power and control structures wielded by international organizations of the neoliberal era as discussed previously. Therefore, although various curriculum reform projects were attempted during the course of time, these have achieved limited success. This is because, as explained by Obanya (2011), reforms “simply tinkered with curricula, school calendar and the mere proliferation of institutions” (p.xxv). In other words, in spite of the many calls from African scholars, national ACOs have simply not engaged in radical curriculum changes that will stimulate the indigenous production of knowledge. As such, there has been no significant shift from the privileging of colonial/neoliberal knowledge paradigm to ways of knowing, which reflects an African perspective. Therefore,

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<sup>67</sup>The Addis Ababa Conference, (1961) The Abidjan Conference (1964), The Nairobi Conference (1968), The Lagos Conference (1976), The Harare Conference (1982), The Dakar Conference (1991)

education curricula are deeply seated in the assumption that Eurocentric knowledge is superior to indigenous African knowledge.

This reality is reflected in for example, the neoliberal pedagogy instituted by the BIA in private primary schools in parts of SSA. Even in government run schools, the most touted reform - Curriculum 2005 in South Africa has foundations in competency-based debates in Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Canada and the United States of America (Cross et al., 2002). Likewise, Francophone Africa still uses French curricula which are subsequently implemented with little or no local input (Holsinger & Cowell, 2000). At the university level, affiliations with Western universities as a result of privatization as I detailed above, guarantees the propagation of a Eurocentric knowledge preference within all disciplines. All the above examples serve to confirm Shizha's (2013) observations that official knowledge and school pedagogy still remains a copycat of colonial constructs of education. As such, African educational policies are therefore carried out in a cultural and educational policy and developmental vacuum in terms of African people's everyday lives.

In the above paragraphs, I examined the ways the concept of education is used as a sociocultural mechanism from precolonial to imperial education in SSA. Although the intentions and manners significantly diverge, the ultimate aim is to ensure a successful transmission of the dominant sociocultural factors that guarantees the longevity of a particular society.

## **Conclusion**

Education remains the most effective medium that ensures intergenerational knowledge production and transfer, which is, in other words, the most appropriate site that makes individual and societal change possible; hence my use of the term education as a social cultural mechanism. Nevertheless, education can be used negatively or positively to exert control. Therefore, in this chapter, I analyze the manners in which education as a sociocultural mechanism continue to be used as an effective medium to formulate, impart the development, preservation and perpetuation of socioeconomic and political strategies of pre-colonial and post-colonial SSA.

The intent and practices instituted by precolonial societies with regards to their education was successful within its context given that the education processes were specifically designed and implemented to meet the needs of and benefit society as determined by Africans at that time. The advent of imperialism however ruptured the holistic practices of the precolonial era. The main intent of imperial education in SSA was to reorient the African mindset from its natural and organic context to that of the dominant socioeconomic and political structure of the imperial nations to facilitate the continued imperial project within SSA. As we can deduct from my explanations on imperial education above, the practice imposed by the colonial state endures even into the post-colonial era and to this the current neoliberal pedagogy has gained a foothold. This imperial education continues to be used to service and uphold imperial dominant structures and is of enormous detriment to the poverty and underdevelopment crisis of

SSA. The legacies of education as a sociocultural mechanism in post-colonial imperial SSA is analyzed as well as the economic and political mechanisms are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN SUB SAHARAN AFRICA -  
IMPERIAL LEGACIES

**Introduction**

Poverty and underdevelopment are global occurrences. Nonetheless, their manifestations are not homogenous phenomenon, but are experienced in different and distinctive manners in both the developed and developing world. However, all the countries within Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) are classified according to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) as developing nations (Nielsen, 2011). This classification implies that Sub Saharan Africans experience poverty and of course underdevelopment at chronic levels. Since individual nations in SSA gradually gained independence, each generation of Sub Saharan Africans has had to deal with the reality of lower standards of living than that of the previous creating a prolonged developmental crisis. Consequently, regardless of one's social class or wealth status within their communities, the deep rooted and pervasive realities of poverty and underdevelopment dictates that all members of society are exposed to the ongoing residual effects.

In this dissertation, I am arguing that the legacies of colonialism and neocolonialism are the historical and contemporary factors that continue to prolong this crisis in SSA. I name this process as the uninterrupted imperial project. The imperial project suggests that independence from colonial rule did not necessarily translate into



total self-determination for former colonies. Rather, even at independence, imperial powers – through what I also term the structures of the imperialism that is decolonizing agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization – continue to exert influence in nuanced manners within the internal affairs of the nations of SSA, particularly through economic, political and sociocultural mechanisms. The fundamental objective is for access, control and exploitation of the economies of their former colonies. Specifically, I argue, these phenomena maintain a choke hold on the peoples of SSA with direct and sustained impact on poverty and underdevelopment within the SSA region. I also maintain that the imperial project is sustained as Sub Saharan Africans (Africans) in general have not significantly and collectively interrogated neither its structures nor its mechanisms. In chapter two, I examined the political and economic structures as well as the mechanisms which ensure the imperial project. In Chapter three I discussed the evolution of education as a sociocultural mechanism of imperialism. This chapter is my attempt to synthesize salient points from both chapters two and three. I aim to demonstrate that these structures and mechanisms of imperialism, in tandem, continue to etch indelible and negative residual consequences for the region.

For the purposes of clarity, I divide the chapter into three sections, each addressing the political, economic and sociocultural legacies. Nevertheless, analyzing them separately does not indicate a rigid separation, rather there is a fluid, multiple and overlapping relationship between the three. For as discourses are always concurrent, the legacies of the economic structure and mechanism for example have direct impact on the political and sociocultural contexts. Likewise, as imperialism is a continuous project,

some elements of these structures and mechanisms are only applicable to the colonial era, whilst others are specific in post-colonial times.

### **Economic Legacies of the Imperial Project**

Economic opportunities and eventual benefit are foundational to the practice of imperialism. After all, it was access to the abundance of natural resources and other potentials to fuel the European industrial revolution that initiated the European scramble for Africa. In order to fuel this current age of technological revolution and mass consumerism, the desire and quest to access resources remain unabated in the post-colonial era. Multinational (MNCs) and Transnational Corporations (TNCs) under the auspices of their respective home governments continue their unhindered access to these resources. Therefore, control of the entire system and process of production remains a constant and fundamental feature of imperial policy in SSA. The structures and practices implemented for continued access to these resources and potentials continue to have repercussions on poverty and underdevelopment opportunities in SSA. In this section, I analyze the economic legacies within SSA.

#### **Overspecialization**

Prior to the imperial partition of Africa, local production provided Africans with a wide variety of consumer goods and products according to the needs and demands of precolonial SSA societies. Africans produced commodity, food and cash crops that they traded with other Africans as well as with Arabs and Europeans. Africans established mechanisms to regulate both internal and external trade. For instance, the Fante

Confederation<sup>68</sup> set up in 1868 (Boahen, 1987), in the West African country now known as Ghana was such a mechanism to ensure sustainable internal development as well as regulate external trade. In this way, Africans in charge of their economies had significant control over the system of production. They could determine types and quantities of crops, minerals and other products to trade, without significant external influence or interference.

This organic system of production and trade in precolonial SSA aligns with the economic theories of specialization and economic diversification. Since no one society can be totally self-sufficient, the mutual exchange of goods and services in external trade becomes imperative. Specialization as argued by economist Adam Smith (1776) recognizes the production gains to an economy that concentrates its system of production or specializes in a limited variety of goods and or services to ensure a greater degree of overall productive efficiency. Economic diversity within an economy, on the other hand, is vital for economic sustainability. A reliance on the specialization of limited products exposes an economy to the dynamics and volatility of the markets especially in terms of “fluctuations in commodity prices, demand and extreme weather events such as droughts and floods,” (OECD/UN, 2011, p.11) shortages and surpluses. Therefore, economies must endeavor to be complex and economically diverse by engaging in the production of different goods and services (Abouchakra, et al (2008).

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<sup>68</sup>The Organization was set up not only to regulate trade, but as a way to promote internal development by establishing social organizations such as schools. The Organization also sought to engage in economic diversification.

However, precolonial production systems were not necessarily in sync with the emerging industrialization needs of Europe. Therefore, as the result of the partition of SSA per the agreements at the Berlin Conference began to manifest physically on the ground, colonial powers gradually wrestled control of the local economies from African rulers. The African system of production became subjugated to colonial economic policies. African communities were compelled to abandon their organic system, and subsequently forced to produce goods and commodities that were useful to the industrializing needs of the imperial powers. Henceforth, SSA became integrated, albeit as unequal partners, into the capitalist global economy, reified as producer of raw materials bound for the dockyards and factories of imperial nations. Instead of a combination of food crops such as millet, sorghum and cash crops such as cotton and palm oil, production was reoriented to a plantation style system producing cash or commercial crops such as cotton, sugar, palm oil, peanuts, rubber and wool to satisfy the tastes of the growing European middle class.<sup>69</sup> All these products and crops in their raw states had to be exported to the mother country at a price dictated by the parastatal monopoly of the colonial government (Khapoya, 2012) to be developed into finished products. SSA also became a lucrative market for these surplus products.

At independence, both the imperial powers and Africans themselves recognized the relative structural weaknesses of these newly independent nations. Africans once again ‘in control’ of their economies were expected to fulfil their traditional role of

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<sup>69</sup>The rubber plantations in The Belgian Congo for example grew rubber to manufacture Dunlop’s new invention of the pneumatic tire in 1845, whilst Tate & Lyle’s plantation in Zambia and Zimbabwe produced sugar.

exporting raw materials to Western markets. The surplus accumulated from these sales, it was envisaged, would be reinvested into their economies to serve as a catalyst for national development (Saul & Ley, 1999). In addition to cash crops, the advent of new technology in the postcolonial era allowed the discovery of additional precious commodities and rare materials – referred to as the extractive industry. These products such as titanium, cobalt, iron ore, gas and oil are all mined or extracted for shipment to the industrialized nations for further processing. As was the practice during colonialization, the finished products fuel the current global technological consumption and consumerism age with surplus reverted to markets in SSA. The role of each SSA nation has therefore become reified in the specialized production and exporting of a few raw primary commodities and extractive industry products found in their respective countries.

I therefore use the term overspecialization, consistent with the literature (OECD/UN, 2011 & Davies, 2015), to indicate that imperialism has not allowed SSA to return to its precolonial pragmatic position of maintaining the delicate balance between specialization and economic diversity in the management of its economy. Rather, the narrow focus of producing a monoculture system of raw materials has altered the process of production, creation and consumption patterns within SSA, which I argue further complicates its poverty and underdevelopment realities.

Firstly, the imperial demand for raw materials from SSA has resulted in the agricultural sector being diverted towards the production of these "imperial products" and therefore the region concentrates on producing less of what it needs and more of what it

does not need<sup>70</sup>. As such, traditional dietary staples like millet, fornio, cassava and sorghum, which previously guaranteed self-sufficiency in food production, are minimally produced. This has resulted in the much-publicized tragedy of food insecurity where the people of the region are unable to feed themselves, and there is recurrent famine in several countries within SSA. This scenario prompted Mazrui (1978) to comment that SSA produces what it does not consume and consumes what it does not produce. With the continued status quo, the people of the region continue to rely on food aid and subsidies from external sources. A nation of people unable to feed themselves does not garner much respect, nor can it afford to make demands that are beneficial to its people within the international stage. As such, SSA continues to sustain its assigned position as an underdeveloped region.

Secondly, Mazrui's observations are further reflected in the imperial policy and practice of shipping raw materials to industrialized nations, which are subsequently shipped back to SSA as finished products after value has been added. The African producers of these raw materials lack the basic infrastructure, in terms of skills, and the capacity to produce at the level of the industrialized nations. Even if they were so endowed, producers in Africa cannot compete economically within the global market. This flooding of Africa with European made goods has created a reliance on foreign made goods resulting in a lack of societal imperative and capacity to industrialize. As such, indigenous technological as well as industrial advances and know-how have

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<sup>70</sup>As reported by Duval Smith (2017) for example, although chocolate is too expensive for cocoa farmers in Ivory Coast to purchase, a quarter of that country's population depend on the crop for a living.

remained stalled. As exemplified by Kalinaki (2014), the town of Jinja in eastern Uganda, is one of SSA's attempts at industrialization to produce diverse products such as matches, steel and beer for local consumption. However, Jinja ceased to operate at full capacity more than 30 years ago unable to withstand the pressure from foreign competitors. Consequently, the dreams of industrialization in Uganda were abandoned. Therefore, I argue that SSA's high rate of unemployment, particularly amongst its youth population, can be directly correlated to its lack of access to manufacturing and industrialization technologies that will create jobs, and revitalize the region's economies growth. This, in my opinion, further contributes to the prolongation of poverty and underdevelopment in the region.

Finally, the countries of SSA, as postcolonial economies are now fully integrated into the capitalist system and are susceptible to its vagaries, which in turn contribute to poverty and underdevelopment in the region. For example, although SSA continues to maintain its role as purveyor of raw materials, it has minimal role in setting the prices for the raw materials that it produces. It is in this sense a price taker as governments must trade at conditions determined by the market. Furthermore, overspecialization results in the region's economies being vulnerable when negative changes occur within the international market, vis-à-vis terms of trade, surpluses and decreased demands on the raw materials the region produces (Ibrahim, 2013). This is evidenced by SSA's economies inability to recover from the relative decline in demand and subsequently in the pricing for its primary commodities, as well as its extractive industry products. This decrease in trading patterns according to United Nations Conference on Trade and

Development (UNCTAD, 2005) commenced in the early 1960s and lasted well into the early years of this millennium. Nascent SSA governments had envisaged that the revenue obtained from their natural resources was to become the impetus to finance post-independent SSA. To the contrary, the sustained loss of revenue has resulted in the halt of the post-independence agenda visualized by African nationalist leaders as they became unable to access much needed revenue to develop their respective nations. The fate of Jinja as mentioned above is an example of such an inability to implement and maintain sustainable development, which could positively impact attempts at poverty eradication in the region.

Nevertheless, SSA nations, through the policies as enforced by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), are obligated to continue in their production as overspecialized monoculture economies. As I have mentioned previously, reliance on the production of a particular product runs the risk of exposure to the dynamics of shortages and surpluses within the market resulting in negative economic tendencies for the region. The repercussions of overspecialization, as I have detailed above, has resulted in the overdependence of SSA as the quintessential and perpetual aid and loan recipient, which has morphed into the debt trap. Together, these are major hindrances to address the poverty and underdevelopment rates in SSA.

### **Foreign Aid/Overseas or Official Development Assistance (ODA)**

Since the dawn of independence, SSA governments have been faced with the challenge of securing adequate revenue to fulfill their duties and obligations to their citizens without support – financial or otherwise – from the IFIs and other industrialized



nations, commonly referred to as foreign aid or Overseas or official development assistance (ODA). The policy of Developmentalism as envisaged by the imperial powers was to be partly funded by SSA trading their natural resources in the international market as well as the injection of foreign aid to stimulate economic growth and supplement domestic sources of finance (Ekanayake & Chatrna, 2010). In other words, Developmentalism and foreign aid were envisaged as the panacea for addressing SSA's national revenue deficit in the immediate post-independence era and beyond. However, overspecialization, as I have detailed above, have gradually resulted in the overdependence of SSA nations as quintessential seekers and recipients of foreign aid. Foreign aid according to Omotolaa and Saliu, (2009) consists of bilateral and multilateral agreements or arrangements that are awarded in various forms to include grants, loans, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), joint ventures as well as project aid, technical and humanitarian assistance. Throughout the years, foreign aid in general, but particularly to SSA has mushroomed into a big and profitable industry in terms of the proliferation of agencies, its geographical reach and worth (Collinson et al., 2013). With an annual worth of \$55.8 billion, it is comparable to the combined output of the poorest twenty countries in the region (Perry, 2015). Moyo (2009b) refers to these dynamics of aid as 'The Aid Industry'. Indeed, preliminary statistics of The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), estimates that SSA received more aid than any other region - thirty six billion dollars in 2015.

However, there is much debate surrounding the viability of foreign aid to uplift or address the poverty and underdevelopment crisis in SSA (Papanek, 1972; Clemens et al.,

2012; Amin, 2014;). However, similar to Moyo (2009a&b) and Easterly (2008), I share the perspective that indeed foreign aid continues to negatively impact the poverty and underdevelopment realities in the region and as such poses major impediments to addressing them; I cite the reasons for this in the paragraphs below.

**Culture of aid dependency.** SSA continues to be inundated with aid – whether in the form of monetary loans or grants; experts or consultants; debt relief; food; medical supplies; military support, as well as other technical assistance – as the people of SSA hold out hope of addressing the region’s poverty and underdevelopment crisis. However, in the almost half century of receiving aid, the region still struggles with issues of poverty and underdevelopment – the reality that I address in this dissertation. Instead of addressing the underlying reason for assistance, aid has created a culture of aid dependency in SSA. Aid dependency, according to Brautigam and Knack (2004), is “a situation in which the government is unable to perform many of the core functions of governments, such as the maintenance of existing infrastructures or the delivery of basic public services, without foreign aid funding and expertise” (p. 257). Clemens et al. (2012) further specify that a country that adopts as a long-term strategy of reliance on external donors for more than 15-20% of its national budget projection is categorized as aid dependent.

The staggering statistics detailing the percentage of government expenditure that relies on foreign aid confirms, according to the above standards, that the majority of SSA nations are aid dependent. According to World Bank Data, 14.1 % of SSA’s government expenditure in 2015 was received as Official Development Assistance (ODA) from donor

nations; even countries that are considered as ‘success stories’ or ‘strong performers’ are aid dependent<sup>71</sup>. The use of aid as a long term economic strategy has resulted in a pattern of unproductive public consumption (Alesina & Dollar, 2000). That is to say that the readily available access to aid in its various forms has not helped Africans achieve sustainable development. To the contrary, Africans have surrendered control and adopted a culture of dependency whereby organic ideas have limited chances of germinations. This state, in turn, consequently hinders avenues to initiate progress or reforms amongst successive generations of Africans that will adequately address the region’s predicament.

Evidence of inhibitions to growth is present in all areas and sectors that foreign aid is purported to secure. For instance, over reliance on humanitarian aid donated in the form of food and medical supplies bears negative repercussions on the local agriculture and health industries; as they are unable to withstand the pressure associated with the influx of “free goods”. Shah (2012) reports that food aid in particular produces a glut in the market, which in turn decreases the demand and prices of local food. The drop in demand and prices subsequently depresses local food production as it disincentivizes local producers from engaging in farming activities leading to agricultural stagnation, thereby repeating the dependency cycle. Similarly, aid for infrastructural projects (project aid) also perpetuates the culture of dependency. Donors bring with them essential

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<sup>71</sup>In the percentage of government expenses that rely on aid, Ghana for example records 33.8% in 2009 which decreased to 21.6 in 2011. In Lesotho, another success story, the data was 25% in 2012 but rose to 32% in 2013. At the other end of the spectrum in ‘basket case economies’, The Democratic Republic of Congo at its height of dependency recorded 787% in 2003 falling to 193% in 2010, whilst Liberia peaked at 694% in 2008, but decreased to 106% in 2013.

technical experts and skills to carry out specific tasks (such as road or dam construction). The dependency culture is perpetuated as knowledge, know-how and skills are not transferred to the local population (Thomas et al, 2011). Furthermore, foreign aid is usually bilateral or multilateral in nature. This channeling of funds and resources primarily through governments encourages a statist rather than a private sector approach to economic development. Such a statist approach perpetuates dependency in SSA. This is because, as expressed by Friedman (1958), channeling of aid through SSA government strengthens the role and capacity of the individual nation states to embark on projects and other investment ventures that would otherwise be initiated by private investors. Economic assets concentrated in the hands of the state gives power, disproportionately, to the state. It creates an imbalance in the local market as it stifles entrepreneurial innovation, creativity and healthy competition. Furthermore, a weakened private sector has minimal bearings on articulating for more governmental accountability (Quadir, 2009; Peron, 2001). This statist approach, as pursued within the economies of SSA since decolonization, engenders a set of dynamics that further hinders addressing the poverty and underdevelopment condition; I name this Diminished state/governance Accountability.

**Diminished state/governance accountability.** As I have indicated in previous paragraphs, a majority share of SSA government expenditure is supplemented through ODA and not from taxes and other internal revenue sources. Therefore, SSA nation states are not necessarily compelled to seek approval, support or even accommodate neither their citizens nor local parliamentary cooperation. Within the backdrop of the

culture of dependency, SSA governments are in the words of Hayma (2008) playing to two audiences simultaneously – its donor base and its citizens. In negotiating between these entities, SSA governments seem to be more accountable to their external funding sources than to their own citizens. This donor/recipient relationship and its repercussions on Africans are best described by Moyo (2000b) as:

A constant stream of “free” money is a perfect way to keep an inefficient or simply bad government in power. As aid flows in, there is nothing more for the government to do – it doesn’t need to raise taxes, and as long as it pays the army, it doesn’t have to take account of its disgruntled citizens. No matter that its citizens are disenfranchised (as with no taxation there can be no representation). All the government really needs to do is to court and cater to its foreign donors to stay in power. (p. 3).

However, such capital infusion in the form of foreign aid is not given in a value free manner. Alesina & Dollar (2000) in their study on the allocation of aid find that patterns of distribution are dictated by political and strategic considerations, which do not necessarily align with the interests of the peoples of SSA. Indeed, as I detail in the next section, SSA leaders are beholden to a donor base whose motives for ‘giving’ or ‘helping’ does not run parallel to the authentic needs and aspirations of the peoples of SSA. As such, in issues concerning aid management within their respective economies, the reciprocal donor/recipient relationship results in SSA governments neither accountable to nor held accountable by donors to invest in activities that will induce economic growth, thereby addressing SSA economic degeneration.

I therefore use the term diminished State/Governance accountability to signify that the decades of massive foreign aid inflows into the coffers of SSA governments has

systematically eroded the quality of governance in SSA. In other words, it has resulted in a gradual disengagement of SSA states to fulfill its duties and obligations to their people. This “liberation from their people” (Adams, 1991) has significant bearings on SSA governments’ capacity and ability to respond to the region’s most pressing reality – addressing poverty and underdevelopment.

Nevertheless, aid can positively contribute to the development of nations. Even aid in the form of loans when productively invested can yield a profitable investment to offset future debt repayments. These potentials of aid have been documented by scholars such as van Rijckeghem & Weder (2001), Knack, (2001), Leshore, (2013) and Loxley & Sackey, (2008). However, in SSA, the abdication of the governance class from its role and responsibilities to its fellow citizens continues the unproductive public consumption of aid (Alesina & Dollar 2000). Without the burden of accountability, governments and politicians routinely fail to use the revenue and services from foreign aid to implement structural reforms as well as to initiate productive and sustainable projects to facilitate ease of debt repayments (Moss et al., 2006).

Instead foreign aid is regarded as an alternative source of revenue used to pursue ill-conceived and economically specious policies. For example, statism serves to reinforce the patrimonial element within SSA governments. Particularly, aid flows originally destined to help Africans are diverted to subsidizing employment in the public sector or state-operated enterprises. In this way, aid is used to maintain bloated bureaucracies and uphold systems of patronage - the so-called phenomenon of ‘jobs for

the boys'. Indeed, bloated and inefficient governmental bureaucracies are often cited by investors as one of the most problematic factors for doing business in SSA.

Also, a significant portion of aid to SSA is used to finance grandiose projects that are of little economic value to the peoples of SSA. In what Mufson (1986) and Robinson & Torvik (2005) describe as 'white elephant projects', massive investment projects were embarked upon with negative social or economic benefit to the community or country. Rimmer (1969) explains that these white elephant projects are routinely embarked upon "without feasibility studies and without competitive tendering. New enterprises distributed among party functionaries as private fiefs, enables them to give patronage to relatives, friends, and supporters" (p. 195). SSA is littered with a multitude of these projects to include basilicas, grand conference halls, new capitals, and show airports, unfinished and inoperable infrastructural projects<sup>72</sup>. As the location and type of public investments are determined by political rather than economic considerations, Mufson (1986) and Robinson & Torvik (2005) conclude these projects not only crowd out ones that are socially desirable and beneficial but are embarked upon with the explicit understanding that they are indeed white elephants.

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<sup>72</sup>Togo's steel mill in West Africa is a prime example of a white elephant project. According to Everett (1987), even though Togo's production and consumption of steel is minimal, this did not deter the construction of a \$42 million high capacity steel mill plant. Moreover, the mill completed in 1972, neither operated at more than twenty percent capacity nor did it generate any profit until its closure in 1979. The country had paid off only one-quarter of the cost of the plant. The remaining loans were refinanced at interest rates higher than the original concessionary rates. Similarly, funded with Norwegian government loan guarantees, the Lake Turkana fish processing plant in the Kenyan arid northwest region was intended in 1971 to provide jobs in the fishing industry for the community. At completion, the plant only operated for a few days before it permanently ceased operation. The nomadic lifestyle of the Turkana people with no history of fishing or eating fish; the high cost of operating the freezers; and the demand for clean water in the desert were too high to make the plant financially sustainable.

Finally, further evidence of a severed relationship between the SSA ruling class and its citizens is the threat of violence or actual violence unleashed to create a culture of fear in order to maintain power. Political survival is after all according to Bueno de Mesquita (2003), the predominant objective of all political actors. Instead of creating spaces for political and economic reforms to quell dissent from its disenfranchised citizens, authoritarian African leaders instead provide the necessary resources and wealth to invest in oppressive state apparatuses, which governments can willingly use against any opposition (Rajan & Subramanian 2007; Ahmed, 2013). In a region where an estimated 70% of governmental expenditure is based on foreign aid, “autocratic recipient governments use foreign aid at least partly for their survival, be it by redistributing additional rents to strategic groups or by financing repression” (Bader & Faust, 2014, p. 576).

For example, during the period of the cold war, aid, in the form of military assistance as well as loans, was routinely used by regimes to purchase arms and other materials to repress citizens and safeguard their positions. South Africa is a prime example of this phenomenon. As part of its policies of Apartheid and *cordon sanitaire*, military aid was used to purchase arms and other equipments to be used against fellow South Africans as well as its “black neighbors” in order to ensure the survival of the apartheid regime (Walker & Nattrass, 2002). Likewise, in current times, Ethiopia has, since April 2014, faced large scale civil unrest<sup>73</sup>. Social tensions and economic

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<sup>73</sup>The unrest started by the Oromo ethnic group has from November 2015 morphed into a popular mobilization against the dominant ethnic Tigraya ethnic group who hold political power.



marginalization to include land ownership rights, corruption, political repression and poverty are the stated shared grievances (Pinaud & Raleigh, 2016). The government responded violently to the protests, resulting in thousands of casualties and tens of thousands of people being arrested and charged with terrorism offenses. Ethiopia stands accused by Human Rights Watch (2014) of clamping down on its citizens by “using repressive laws to constrain civil society and independent media and targeting individuals with politically motivated prosecutions” (para. 1). However, suppression of dissent in Ethiopia is mostly ignored in Western media unlike in other countries (Hunt, 2010). This is because the symbiotic donor/recipient relationship dictates that Ethiopia receives its \$3.2 billion in 2015 (OECD) - the highest funded aid nation in SSA and its current government survives politically, albeit having severed its relationship with its citizens in the process. In turn, Ethiopia must fulfill its role as a partner in the global war on terror in which foreign aid is the strategic foreign policy bargaining tool.

### **Foreign Aid as a Foreign Policy Tool**

As I discussed previously, the aid industry is a mammoth in SSA with far reaching influences and consequences for both the donor as well as the recipient. As such, it has become an indispensable tool in the arsenal of foreign policy. Apodaca (2017) defines foreign policy as a “country’s behavior with regard to other states in the international arena, driven by its need to achieve its goals”, (p.1). These goals whether, ideological, economical, national security or to solve international problems dominate nation’s foreign policy agendas. Although the dominant rhetoric amongst donors is that foreign policy tools such as foreign aid are to reduce poverty and promote development,

scholars such as Bigsten et al. (2011) conclude that the aim is strategic. In other words, aid is a means to exert influence in order to shift opinions or situations to desired positions and interests. These descriptions of foreign aid mirror my conceptualization of the Imperial Project. As such the foreign policy of the imperial project remains the use of foreign aid as a conduit to access, control and exploit the resources of SSA. Therefore, the use of foreign aid as a foreign policy tool has negative bearings on the poverty and underdevelopment predicament of SSA. This is so because the underlying intention was and remains to benefit the system it was set up to promote. Continued imperial interference through foreign aid has negative results on the poverty and development discourse in SSA as follows:

**The debt trap.** There are significant distinctions between the different types of foreign aids that are offered to SSA. Most important is the fact that some aid is awarded as grants. These types of grant are considered as gift between nations. On the other hand, other types of loans are either approved either as grants or loans. SSA nations are obligated to pay back such loans plus interest within an agreed time. Therefore, describing these types of loans as aid is vigorously questioned within international development circles (Omotola & Saliu, 2009).

A significant percentage of these loans were classified as ‘soft loans’ or on concessionary terms meaning that they were approved on terms considered favorable to the borrower (loans provided to poorest countries with lower interest rates and longer repayment periods than typical or standard market or multilateral loans). Nevertheless, the nature and terms of these soft loans encouraged many SSA nations to amass a large

amount of public debt. However, as a result of various factors<sup>74</sup> the projected growth in their economies did not materialize and as such, SSA nations were unable to fulfill the repayment conditions of the loans leading to the debt crisis.

As such, since the onset of the debt crisis of the 1980s, the sustainability of long-term debts has been of primary concern for both SSA nations and their donors. The IFIs through the years has instituted various initiatives to ensure that SSA meets its debt obligations. Through the Paris Club<sup>75</sup> SSA nations and their creditors (the IFIs) were engaged between 1982 to 1995 in vigorous rounds of rescheduling and restructuring of their debts under the various terms of agreements (Lambert, 2011)<sup>76</sup>. However, criticism of the handling of the debt crisis by the Paris Club and the IFIs gained political momentum in the 1990s. The clarion call of international activist group was an end to the cycle of restructuring and rescheduling to be replaced with sustainable debt relief or total debt cancellation. The response was the launch in 1996 of the Heavily Indebted Poor

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<sup>74</sup>To include overspecialization, oils shocks, rise in interest rates, wars and poor governance.

<sup>75</sup>The Paris Club which had been meeting regularly since 1956 is an informal forum of creditor countries from 19 big economies of the world. Their role is to co-ordinate debt restructuring, relief, and cancellation for indebted nations and their creditors. It has increasingly been granting larger debt reductions for the HIPC.

<sup>76</sup>Conditionalities such as the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the 1980s attached macroeconomic conditions like reduced budget deficits, devaluation, and reduced domestic credit expansion, and structural conditions like freeing controlled prices and interest rates, reducing trade barriers, and privatizing state enterprises, (Easterly, 2003). By the end of the 1990s, the eight categories of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) replaced the SAPs. In addition to structural adjustment, SSA nations must prioritize poverty reduction and good governance by 2015 (Sachs, 2012). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeeded the MDGs in 2015. The SDGs focuses on poverty reduction and sustainable development. It aims to reach its more ambitious seventeen goals and 169 targets by 2025, (Shettima, 2016).

Countries Initiative I (HIPC I). The HIPC 1 was modified in 1999 to the (HIPC II) which provided debt relief at deeper, broader and faster pace. This comprehensive “new paradigm for international action” (Berensmann, 2004, p. 321), strives to ensure “that no poor country faces a debt burden it cannot manage” (International Monetary Fund, (IMF) 2011). According to Isar (2012), the fundamental premise of the initiative was that countries accepted into the program, after a rigorous vetting process to meet the eligibility criteria, should in principle record a permanent and sustainable reduction in their level of external debt, which would end the cycle of debt rescheduling and restructuring. Again, through political pressure, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) approved by Finance Ministers at the 2005 G8 meeting is another attempt at ensuring debt sustainability by the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Fund (AfDF). Although the MDRI cancels 100 percent of the outstanding obligations of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) incurred before 2004, the completion criteria for the HPCI II initiative must be met in order to be eligible (Gunter, 2016).

The debt sustainability frameworks are based on the idea that savings gained from reduced debt service payments will free up resources and allow SSA nations to invest in spending that will reduce the poverty and underdevelopment rates in their respective countries so as to meet the MDGs (now SDGs). However, the expected economic result from these various debt relief initiatives have yet to produce tangible results so far in SSA. For example, none of the countries that signed SAPs conditionality restructuring or rescheduling agreement made any meaningful socio-economic growth. This long period of stagnation between the mid-1970s and 1990s prompted the Economist (2000) to refer

to Africa as “The hopeless continent.” However, a more favorable external environment began to turn Africa around from stagnation to growth in the mid-1990s (Toh, 2016). The rigorous eligibility criteria attached to the HIPC II and the MDGs were apparently working in favor of Africans<sup>77</sup>. It is within this background that the “Africa Rising” narrative heralded in the early 2000s (Beresford 2016). According to this optimistic rendition, the potential investment and business opportunities of the region was represented in the business media (Versi, 2013) as well as in academia (Matean, 2012).

The optimism was short lived. The economic growth and political stability were unsustainable as indicated by the outcomes of the MDGs, the standards upon which the performance of developing countries and their donors were expected to meet (Nwachukwu, 2011). Eventually, in summer 2015, the UN announced that only six countries in SSA – Angola, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ghana, Mali and Sao Tome e Principe – out of the 51 nations in SSA have met only MDG 1 out of the total eight MDGs. To the contrary however, SSA groans under the weight of an excruciating debt burden. The region, as recorded by Ondoa. (2017), still remains home to several of the most heavily indebted developing countries in the world. Furthermore, the Africa Rising narrative combined with the global financial crisis of 2008, meant that SSA nations still had access

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<sup>77</sup>According to the IMF by (2017), by 2011 thirty-six of the thirty-nine countries qualified or are eligible or potentially eligible for HIPC Initiative Assistance are in SSA. Furthermore, debt relief payment for these countries was estimated to be reduced to 80% between 2001 and 2009 whilst debt service paid declined by about 1.8 percentage points of GDP between 2001 and 2014. Likewise, Koch (2014) reports that six of the world's 10 fastest growing economies are sub-Saharan countries (for example Mozambique, DRC, Zambia and Angola), with an overall regional projected GDP increase of 5.5% by 2015. On the political front, with nearly 20 presidential elections held in 2011–2012, and a decline in conflicts (Munang & Mgendi, 2015), the region was also experiencing increasing political stability.

to international capital markets by new borrowing and lending (Ncube & Brixiová, 2013) through Sovereign or Eurobonds issued by some SSA governments<sup>78</sup>. This new phase of borrowing and lending has however resurfaced the concern over debt sustainability. Jones (2016) informs that for example Ghana - an economic powerhouse in SSA since qualifying for debt cancellation in 2005, has amassed its external debt from \$2.3 billion to \$19 billion, most of which has been bonds. The possibility of Ghana defaulting on its loan is probable given the fall in gold and oil prices<sup>79</sup> and the resulting rapid decline in the country's revenue and GDP. The outcomes of the MDGs, slow economic growth and the specter of a new debt crisis in the horizon, which could lead to further economic stagnation and increasing poverty, is a *déjà vu*. In acknowledging this reality, the Africa Rising narrative has been significantly toned down with the region once again assuming notoriety with representations such as "Africa Rising? 'Africa Reeling'" (Gettleman, 2016) and "No Longer Rising." (Rao, 2017).

In light of my representations above, I am arguing that SSA is caught up in a cycle which I call, like Parfitt & Riley (1986), the Debt Trap. That firstly, the region is in a revolving door of unsustainable external debt. External debt is acknowledged as a major hindrance to addressing poverty and underdevelopment in the region as the burden of debt repayments diverts investments from domestic spending (Canel, 2009). Also, the various debt sustainability initiatives instituted by the IFIs do not envisage a complete

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<sup>78</sup>South Africa, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Zambia Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

<sup>79</sup>Similar conditions precipitated the 1980s debt crisis.

elimination of SSA debt obligations. Rather as the term implies, it is spreading out of a debt that can be managed according to the economic capacity of a particular debtor nation. In this way, the debt can be recouped and the debtor nation can further access new avenues for loans, perpetuating the debt trap cycle (Guttal, 2000). As such, aid is an effective foreign policy tool of the imperial project that serves to uphold the debt trap with negative consequences poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Therefore, aid and the lending mechanisms of the IFIs, which spawn the debt trap, are conduits that facilitate continued political, social and economic presences in the affairs of SSA as I examine in the section below.

**Donor interference and meddling.** Whether through bilateral or multilateral loans, the imperial project employs aid to SSA as a means of pursuing underlining foreign policy objectives – which is access and control to ensure its strategic interests are maintained. As explained by Dudley & Montmarquette (1976), “people usually give because they expect to get something in return. . . . In practice, very few transfers are unilateral” (p.133). Implicit in this understanding is that grants and loans are not dispensed in a value free manner, but rather they are forms of reciprocal arrangement. In SSA, the return of foreign aid allows the continued imperial interference into the political socioeconomic activities of SSA nations. Particularly, it is within the intricate relationships of the debt trap as I lay out in the previous section that solidifies the wide spread and flagrant donor penetration on the domestic processes of SSA in this current age of neoliberal globalization.

This is evidenced by the succeeding developmental socioeconomic and political agendas that continue to be imposed on the SSA nations in the debt trap era. SSA governments do not have any influence in formulating these agendas. Nonetheless, as aid dependent debtor nations they must comply or face the corresponding consequences. Debt rescheduling and restructuring initiatives are usually accompanied with directives and stipulations from the donor nations or agencies. A majority of the loan conditions contain damaging stipulations or lack appropriate cultural contexts (Stanford, 2015). SSA is replete with examples of such aid directives which accompany aid packages that are not pro African and therefore unsuitable to address their realities of poverty and underdevelopment<sup>80</sup>. However, most poignant and relevant in my estimation as it relates to the possibilities of addressing the poverty and underdevelopment issues within the region is the lack of sustainable policy initiatives to adequately address the problems. On the contrary, even though the effectiveness of the policies is acknowledged, the directives and stipulations continue to be mandated. These problematic status quos are reflected within the confines of knowledge problems and statistical tragedy, which I explain below.

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<sup>80</sup>For example, commentators and observers, Attwell (2013) and Owusu et al., (2003) attribute Malawi's devastating food crisis in 2002 in part as a consequence of IMF policy. Malawi was mandated to sell off its Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR) to settle its mounting debt. The IMF had determined that the country's sale of its surplus distorted trade. Likewise, within the social arena The US Global Gag Rule adopted in 2002 restricts aid to any organization that performs abortion or does not promote abstinence-only form of birth control. As a result, Uganda which had reduced its aids epidemic experienced a doubling of rates within two years (The Center for Reproductive Rights, 2003).



***‘Significant knowledge problems’/‘an African statistical tragedy.’*** Neoliberalism when applied to economic activities of nation states places high priority on the embrace of statistical and numerical computations to ensure best practices (Van Horn & Mirowski, 2009). This perspective conceptualizes countries economic health and performance through Gross Domestic Products (GDP), Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) calculations and household surveys. Such particular focus on quantification prevents an authentic understanding of poverty and underdevelopment. In other words, its root causes, its nature and ways of manifestation, a concise definition and consequently measuring (Banjo, 2009; Carr, 2008; Iyenda, 2007; Alkire & Foster, 2011). Bergamaschi (2009) describes that international requirements (measured poverty) versus local realities has resulted in the “illusion of quantification.” This is to say that there is a growing acknowledgement amongst international observers that the proliferation of poverty data from official sources within SSA as well as amongst international organizations is grossly unreliable. Jerven & Johnson (2013) refers to these challenges as “significant knowledge problems” – hence my use of the term to reflect the significant challenges in appropriate poverty measures as well as generating the quality and quantity of data that will result in “right model” for the conceptualizing of both poverty and underdevelopment that can ultimately lead to alleviation or eradication. These “knowledge problems” are the result of a combination of factors.

Firstly, there is strong politicization of the poverty and underdevelopment data by both SSA governments and IFIs. SSA governments sometimes withhold or misreport statistical data to satisfy their restless populations in times of high scrutiny, for example

close to election periods (Hamilton, 2011). Governments also routinely engage in over or underreporting certain statistics to the IFIs to guarantee continued funding of projects and loans from the IFIs. Sandefur and Glassman (2015), in their survey conducted on school enrollments and vaccinations in twenty-one SSA countries, suggest a significant problem with health and education data. They conclude that there was not only bias towards over reporting enrolment growth in official data, but biases were especially heightened “in part to perverse incentives created by connecting data to financial incentives without checks and balances, and to competing priorities and differential funding associated with donor support” (p.129). Although these data representations are widely acknowledged to be inaccurate (Kodila-Tedika, 2014), the IFIs also complicity and routinely use these sources in order to represent a desired point of view, for example giving credence to projects that the IFIs are interested in implementing (Klasen & Blades, 2013).

Furthermore, although some statistical departments in SSA function at stronger capacities than others, there is a consensus amongst scholars that in general national statistics system are unable to generate reliable data. This depredation is a result of several factors. Data in wars and conflicts zones for example are understandably unreliable given the shifts and changes amongst the population as well as their lifestyles that occur during these periods. Most important however, is the largely diminished fact that national statistics officers are amongst the services that SSA governments have had to withdraw spending as a result of the conditionalities agreements. This withdrawal of support for local SSA statistics centers, coupled with the current international development agenda with its particular focus on measurements, further overwhelms the

ability to produce quality data in a timely manner (Kiregyera, 2015). This results in “knowledge problems.”

Another contributory factor to the issue of unreliable data representation in SSA is that the undertaking to obtain clear and quantifiable objectives of measured poverty by 2015 does not factor the particularities within the region of SSA. For example, the guidelines of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) of the SDGs and the HIPC II make it necessary for its framers to formulate responses to local issues from inorganic perspectives. Specifically, the inconsistencies in the conceptualization of poverty as it relates to a comprehensive definition, as well as the emphasis of survey of households as the premier indicator used to calculate poverty levels, hinders the PRSPs to be effectively implemented in SSA nations. This concept of households as conceived and experienced in the developing world significantly diverges in SSA. Guyer & Peters (1987), for example, present the interactions of members of African households as dynamic not only in their approach to access resources, but as well as along lines of gender and generation, a sharp contrast to the rigid assumptions and application that is used in current poverty calculations.

Similarly, although GDP as a measure of economic progress may be compatible with the economic systems within the developed world (where it originated), GDP projections, however, overlook the nuances of SSA economic activities. According to Livingston et al (2011), 75% of SSAs living in extreme poverty reside in rural areas with agriculture related activities being their main source of living. Nevertheless, agricultural outputs and contributions to national economies are not factored in GDP calculations. In

analyzing the agricultural sector in SSA, Carletto et al., (2015) conclude that the prevalence of small scale agricultural holdings makes the process of measuring agricultural input and output much more tedious; also cross sectoral data collection and collaboration activities are to a large extent minimally practiced in SSA, and lastly the inadequate analysis of data, which undermines the demand for high quality data, are all major contributory factors that hinder the inclusion of the agricultural sector in GDP calculations.

Furthermore, even though post-independence SSA has sought to formalize or modernize its economy, the informal sector or the Black Market or System D<sup>81</sup> has increased significantly in SSA (Johnston-Anumonwo & Doane, D. 2011; ILO 2009). Although the scope and extent of informal economic practices varies significantly across SSA, many sectors including manufacturing, mining, finance, commerce & trade (e.g. street vending) are represented in System D. Chen (2001) estimates that that 93% of new jobs created in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1990s were in the informal sector. In Eastern Africa for instance, the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) informs that the proportion of informal employment in Kenya increased from 70% in 2000 to 83% in 2012. Likewise, Verick (2008) estimates that black market activities account for 60% of Tanzania's GNI. As such, Sparks & Barnett (2010) describes this sustained growth in the SSA informal economy as "no longer a journey but has become the destination of many" (p. 1) Africans who struggle to make a living but whose activities remain unrepresented in national poverty data as the activities within the

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<sup>81</sup>Slang common in French speaking SSA to refer to the black-market economy.

Black Market although prevalent and of meaningful contribution to SSA economic activities given the sustained growth and size, are not included in the measuring of GDP. In other words, GDP does not take into account this entire segment that is of immense economic importance to the economies of this region.

Also, pertinent to the issue of knowledge problems is the unilateral decision by Ghana and Nigeria to undertake an upward revision of their GDPs respectively in 2010. After revisions of base year estimates<sup>82</sup> (from 1993 for Ghana and 1990 to for Nigeria) which took account of other economic activities that were not included prior, GDP in Ghana (including now industrial, services and agricultural sectors) increased more than sixty percent with \$13 billion worth of economic activities unaccounted for in previous years (Jerven et al, 2015); that of Nigeria (now including market for mobile phone and Nollywood) increased from 250 billion to 510 billion USD (Jerven et al 2015). Because of the above GDP revisions, Ghana and Nigeria were upgraded economically from low-income (LI) to lower-middle income (LMI) countries. Subsequent attempts at GDP revisions from Gambia and Liberia in West Africa as well as Burundi in East Africa were not approved by the IFIs. Regardless, the case of Ghana and Nigeria raises significant implications on the reliability of developmental data within SSA.

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<sup>82</sup>In the developing world, with scarce and sparse data sources, a 'base year' is a reference or benchmark year identified by local statisticians for future estimate of GDP calculations. The criteria for a reference year is based on the year when a significant information on the economy is available than usual, for example agricultural and household surveys. As a result of this process of estimation, the base year is an important factor in GDP calculations for SSA.

For instance, in the midst of the recent global economic meltdown, the IFIs have been depicting Africa with ‘Africa Rising’ and ‘The Century of Africa’ narrative (Taylor, 2014). However, these reported increases in the continent’s GDP, the benefit of this new economic growth have failed to impact the lives of many Africans in terms of poverty reduction. Dulani et al’s (2013) survey of 34 countries indicate that there are significant discrepancies between high reported economic growth and the persistence in both frequency and severity, of poverty among ordinary citizens. A majority of SSAs report that meeting their basic daily needs remains a major challenge. For example, Cunguara & Hanlon (2012) inform that the Southeast African nation of Mozambique, classified as one of the poorest nations in the world for two decades now (UNDP, 2009), has since 2001 implemented its PRSPs *Plano de Accção para a Redução de Pobreza Absoluta (PARPA)*. The PARPA had intended to reduce poverty by 45% by 2009. At the same time, Mozambique economic health indicates rapid and outstanding economic GDP growth. This seeming growth makes it worthy of economic recognition in the form of significant influx of aid. Nevertheless, the country’s 2008-2009 data still indicates a 55% increase in its poverty rate as well as worsening rural poverty is indeed a significant statistical paradox.

Also, Ghana’s elevated GDP growth rate and its LMI status has not been pro-poor (Hassan et al., 2012), but has created a class of Africans equivalent to the one per centers in the US. That is economic growth is not trickling down to average citizens thereby resulting in significant poverty reduction, endemic poverty and underdevelopment is evident and remains the norm in its northern regions as well as in other big cities.

Therefore, even though Ghana is still considered one of the most developed countries in SSA, poverty and underdevelopment challenges are consistent within the region. The IFIs supports this reality with the reminder that even with increased GDP, Ghana as well as Nigeria have not fulfilled the criteria of the other indicators of the MDGs.

Shanta Devarajan (2013), chief economist responsible for SSA at the World Bank, in acknowledging the above discussed data inconsistencies and contradictions, named it as an “African Statistical Tragedy” within the SSA region, prompting my use of the term. According to Devarajan official data produced by the IFIs and SSA officials should be taken with a grain of salt as the IFIs are simply unaware of the current data situation for many countries within the region. At the same time, the UN also engaged in the debate; and, at the convening of the UN High Level Panel on post-2015 development goals, there was high priority on a data revolution to improve tracking of economic and social indicators in Africa and the rest of the developing world (United Nations, 2013).

These knowledge problems and the resulting statistical tragedy not only manifest in, but also represent grim realities for Africans. The data projections are not only skewed, but they also represent a lack of understanding of the nature, structures and practices of not only the concepts of poverty and underdevelopment, but also on the economic activities within SSA. Nevertheless, even within this acknowledged weakness in the statistical methodology and the grave policy implications, the IFIs continue to do business as usual within this framework. This attitude, I argue, has tremendous effects on proposing and implementing viable avenues for poverty and underdevelopment reduction strategies within the region, and if not addressed will prolong the misery of the peoples of

SSA. These policies perpetuate the status quo of the imperial project and thus not are in the best interests of the parties they purport to be for, who would benefit from seeking alternatives. Nevertheless, in the meantime, the cycle of the debt trap ensues. The staggering amount that SSA economies must disburse to service its loan obligations, and the consequences attached therein, are inherently linked to what I have termed “resource flight.”

### **Resource Flight**

SSA endowment of immense natural as well as human resources as evidenced in its young and diverse population base is well documented and evidenced by the plethora of ways the imperial project strives to access these available resources. However, I use the term resource flight to convey that the revenue garnered from these resources is not fully or effectively utilized in ways that bring benefits to the peoples of SSA. Instead the revenue and profit, since the era of colonization to this current phase (neoliberal globalization) of the imperial project, are routinely siphoned out of the reach of Africans. I call this capital flight<sup>83</sup>. Likewise, Africans eagerly flee their homeland in droves in order to escape their lives, which are invariably mired in poverty and underdevelopment, to seek gainful employment and better standards of living in foreign lands. I refer to this as human flight or brain drain. I consider both capital and human flight collectively resource flight. These resource flights I contend pose serious impediments to address the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.

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<sup>83</sup>Capital Flight is also referred to Illicit Capital Flight or Illicit Financial Flows.



**Capital flight.** The fundamental understanding of capital flight is the illegal acquisition, transfer and removal of domestic wealth and assets to holdings abroad, permanently denying access to domestic authorities in the source country. Whilst capital flight during colonization can be understood within the confines of this basic characterization, this current phase of neoliberal globalization demands attention to the dynamics and contours inherent in current economic and financial relationships<sup>84</sup>. As such, scholars such as Boyce & Ndikumana, (2012) defines capital flight as “unrecorded capital outflows and measured as the missing residual in the balance of payments, after corrections for underreported external borrowing and trade misinvoicing” (p. 2). According to Kapoor (2007) it is the “unrecorded and (mostly) untaxed illicit leakage of capital and resources out of a country” (p. 6). Implicit to these expanded definitions is that much of the value is deliberately unrecorded and active attempts are made to hide the origin, destination and true ownership of the capital. In light of the above representations, the concept of capital flight was somewhat nuanced during colonial occupation. Although it did not involve direct monetary repatriation as defined by Ndikumana and Kapoor above, it nevertheless shared the insatiable appetite for natural resources to fuel imperial economies, which remains resource extraction from the developing world.

The extent of current capital flight is difficult to officially quantify given its surreptitious nature. Nevertheless, the estimates of Kar, Dev, & Cartwright-Smith (2010)

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<sup>84</sup>In other words, the reduction and liberalization of barriers to financial transactions, and trade have increased the scale and scope of capital flight.

indicate that capital flight is at SSA 82% of the region's GDP between 1970 and 2004. Global Financial Integrity (2017) estimates the amount at between \$36 billion to \$69 billion from 2005 to 2014.

Nigeria, Republic of Congo, and Ivory Coast (West Africa and Central Africa), South Africa, Mauritius, and Angola (Southern Africa) records high volumes of this type of financial hemorrhage. This pace of capital flight outstrips FDI and ODA in SSA (Asongu, 2015). In the section below, I examine the mechanisms that allow for capital flight in SSA.

***Resource extraction.*** Intrinsic to capital flight is the access to natural resources and the ultimate extraction of these materials. These resources include, but are not limited to, industries such as agriculture, mining, fishing and energy. However, whilst the resources extracted might have different connotations in terms of availability, scales and methods of extraction<sup>85</sup>, the basic principle or premise remains the same. That is, the resources extracted as raw materials are subsequently shipped out to imperial factories and dockyards to be developed into finished products.

The extent of resource extraction from formal to informal imperialism is evidenced by the volume of resources extracted and the corresponding very high rates of return<sup>86</sup>. The quantities of worth and revenue from these resources are indeed significant.

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<sup>85</sup>Some natural resources were either unknown or inaccessible with pre-industrial technology or were not yet valuable even overseas. Industries such as fishing and energy became valuable in post-colonial times.

<sup>86</sup>For example, 50% of Dahomey's GDP between 1905 and 1914 according to Manning (1998) was extracted by the French. Reader (1998), also estimates that The Congo Free State's revenue from the export of rubber increased from 260 Belgian Francs (BEF) in 1888 to 43,755 by 1905.

Consistent with the concept of capital flight, natural resources continue to be exploited with the explicit intention neither to benefit the continent nor the people who own the resources. This is evidenced by the various mechanisms that ensure the remittance of revenue obtained to foreign entities – out of the reach of Africans.

***Tax evasion through transfer mispricing and trade mis-invoicing.*** Neoliberal globalization is inducing new and expanded avenues and opportunities to engage in revenue repatriation. Privatization for instance has resulted in a proliferation of foreign MNCs in SSA (Curtis & Todorova, 2011). Predominantly motivated by profitability margins, these MNCs are increasingly engaged in intricate and layered patterns of business and accounting practices that are questionable so as to take advantage of resources offered at cheaper profitable rates and terms. Supraterritorial connectivity (Scholte, 2008)<sup>87</sup> in a borderless, paperless and distanceless world allows MNCs to structure and manage their entities in creative ways<sup>88</sup> so as to take advantage of favorable

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The British in Northern Rhodesia received £2,400,000 in tax revenue from the mines in the Copperbelt region of Southern Africa from 1930 to 1940 (Roberts, 1976). In post-colonial SSA, the amount of copper from mines in the DRC rose from 50,000 tons in the late 1990s to 600,000 tons in 2014, whilst over the same period, Zambia's was 250,000 tons to 850,000 (Kabemba, 2014). Also, Curtis's (2016), review of the operations of companies that trade in commodity products report that British companies control 6.6 billion barrels of oil (currently worth \$276 billion); 3.6 billion tons of coal (worth \$216 billion) and 287 million ounces of platinum (worth \$305 billion) in SSA.

<sup>87</sup>These are social connections that take place within unconfined territorial boundaries that are neither relatively connected nor plotted on axes on fixed geographical spaces. Furthermore, supraterritoriality is characterized by ease of movement; instantaneity in trans-global relationships (ease and quick movement anywhere on the planet) as well trans-world simultaneity (ability to be projected anywhere across the planet at the same time).

<sup>88</sup>Entities include for example, subsidiaries, trusts – legal or sham, dummy corporations, shell corporations and joint ventures.

economic terms (reduced taxes and subsidies). The practices of transfer mispricing and trade mis invoicing are routinely implemented to artificially lower their profit margins and as such qualify for low and decreased tax rates (Bond, 2007). Trade mis invoicing as explained by Ajayi (1995) is the systematic and deliberate under invoicing (by exporters) and over invoicing (by importers) of goods. The excess amount once the goods are sold at the full value is deposited in off shore accounts. Transfer mispricing operates on the same principle of overpricing as trade mis invoicing. However, transfer mispricing is more subtle to detect as the transfer is carried out within internal networks and affiliations of the MNC conducting the trade (Leonard, 2016). Transfer mispricing is more prevalent in the extractive and natural sectors given the size, is more specialized and tends to be more shrouded in secrecy as transactions and agreements are handled by high level government officials.

Mispricing by MNCs between 2005 to 2007 cost Nigeria \$821, Ivory Coast \$261, and Ghana \$121 million in their respective trade to EU and US (Christian Aid, 2009). SSA inadequate tax infrastructure and incapacity to enforce its own taxation regulation makes it vulnerable to this global and complex web of tax evasion. Therefore, tax evasion is overlooked or encouraged by facilitators in both the western world and in SSA itself.

***Odious debt.*** The issues associated with odious debt has origins in loans in the form of foreign aid that SSA nations are obligated to pay back loans plus interest within an agreed time. The region's projected natural resources were used as loan collateral. By the end of the 1970s, cheap loans had morphed into significant debt burdens that eventually became the crisis of the debt trap as I detail previously. The dynamics of the

use of aid as a foreign tool by the imperial project combined with the diminished state/governance accountability significantly decreased the sense of accountability on the part of the SSA governments for productive use of these loans. Therefore, although foreign borrowing brought little improvement to the well-being of ordinary Africans, they are collectively obligated to fulfill these debt obligations referred to as odious debt.

The legal doctrine of odious debt, as defined by Gunter (2016), rests on the underlying principle that sovereign debt incurred without the consent of the people and is not subsequently used for their benefit is illegitimate and odious, therefore should not be transferable to a successor government, especially if creditors were aware of these facts in advance. The loans accrued by the South African apartheid regime to “finance a military machine that was used to repress the majority African population” (Raghuram, 2004, p. 54) is an example of odious debt<sup>89</sup>. Ndikumana & Boyce (2012) have extensively investigated and documented the nuances inherent in odious debt. In 2012, they reported that a significant amount of the loans were unlawfully appropriated and subsequently transferred to safe havens abroad. They reported that through “white elephant projects;” bloated bureaucracies and statism; kick-backs; bribery; padded procurement contracts and ghost workers corrupt government officials were able to divert funds for private use.

Capital flight, through odious debt, according to Berkman (2008) and Boyce & Ndikumana (2011) was also fueled by lax lending practices as well as by irresponsible

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<sup>89</sup>The African National Congress (ANC) inherited the debt of fourteen billion dollars of the apartheid regime.

debt management by private banks and IFIs, similar to the lending that resulted in the subprime mortgage crisis in the US in 2007. As the banks were concerned with profit making, loans to SSA governments were routinely approved by bank officials without any apparent reservations and consideration of circumstances in the borrowing African nation. At the same time, these same financial institutions were actively courting ‘high net worth individuals’ to whom loans were granted to redeposit monies back to the originating bank to be recycled as new loans. Further highlighting the complacent and complicity of the creditors, James Henry, the former chief economist for the international consulting firm McKinsey & Company, as quoted in Ndikumana & Boyce (2012), observed “that in some cases borrowed funds were deposited directly into private accounts in the same foreign banks that initiated the loan” (p. 10).

Ndikumana & Boyce estimate this capital flight for 30 SSA nations between 1970 and 2010 at \$814 billion; including compound interest rates, the total stock amounted to \$1.06 trillion. During this same period of time, the total external debt of these same countries was placed at \$188.6 billion<sup>90</sup>. If only 18% of private external assets were returned to SSA, the continent would be debt free. Therefore, concluded Ndikumana & Boyce, SSA is a net creditor to the rest of the world as a result of such sustained capital flight. Indeed, a capital exporter (Asiedu et al, 2012). The Panama Papers released in

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<sup>90</sup>For example, in return for offering Zaire’s resources, President Mobutu of Zaire was granted loans amounting to \$14 billion, with capital flight from that country during the same time estimated at \$12 billion (Ndikumana & Boyce 1998 & Namikas, 2014). The picture is similar in Kenya. From 1986 to 1995, Kenya received more than eight million dollars in foreign aid. President Moi amassed an estimated fortune of more than one billion dollars (Azami, 2005) whilst the country’s external debt was seven billion dollars.

2016, contained names of prominent political leaders who have used offshore tax havens and other means to avoid taxes and sanctions. The consequences of these actives contribute to the creation of the problem of human flight.

**Human capital flight or brain drain.** The term brain also referred to as human capital flight and has been of concern to academics and policy makers for decades. As discussed by Tucho (2009), it was first used in the 1950s to signify the loss of highly skilled and educated Britons to the US and the attempts to curb the exodus. Although the concept adopts various meanings according to context (Shumba & Mawere, 2012), the essence of loss is integral to its understanding. I refer to brain drain like Levy (2003) as the emigration of a large proportion of highly skilled and educated professionals, usually from a developing country to a developed country offering better social and economic opportunities. In other words, the migration from developing to developed countries. The opening of international borders and ease of travelling in the era of neoliberal globalization has increased the rate and pace of migration. According to the UN and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013), about six out of every ten international migrants reside in the developed regions. This lure of wealth and opportunity has profound effects and represent significant policy challenges for developing nations, especially those in SSA where brain drain is particularly high<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>91</sup>Although scarce and inconsistent data hinders a comprehensive assessment, available statistics represent a continuing trend in SSA. For instance, Earhart et al (2014) in their World Bank report finds that between 1980 and 2010, the population of African migrants in the world has more than doubled and reached about 30.6 million in 2010. The UN (2013) informs that one in every nine persons born in Africa with a tertiary diploma lived in OECD countries between 2010/11 - a fifty percent growth in the past ten years. Finally, estimates between 1960 and 1989, indicate that 127,000 highly qualified African professionals left the continent and Africa has been losing at

This exodus of SSA scarcest of resources presents significant challenges to address the poverty and underdevelopment trajectory of the region. Africans generally migrate during the most productive phase of their professional training or careers. Migration is therefore a significant loss of resource to the nation which has invested in the formative years of their citizens (Iravani, 2011). Furthermore, these emigrants are the vital human resources needed for contributing to the development of their nations for economic, social, scientific, and technological progress. This reality is highlighted by Kasper & Bajunirwe (2012) who inform that not only does SSA have 25% of the global disease burden but only 3% of the world's health care workers, but also that thirty-two SSA countries do not meet the WHO minimum of 23 HCW per 10000 population<sup>92</sup>, prompting Dr Lalla Ben Barka's<sup>93</sup> statement that "in 25 years, Africa will be empty of brains" (Tebeje, 2005). This lack of human resources costs SSA, according to the BBC News (2001), a further four billion dollars of much needed funds annually for expatriate professionals to staffing positions in their respective countries, reducing the economic ability of the region.

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least 20,000 professionals each year since 1990 (Tebeje 2005). Specifically, Gibson & McKenzie (2012) places Ghana's brain drain rate at 44.9%.

<sup>92</sup>The recent Ebola epidemic of 2014 which ravaged Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea highlighted the weakness of SSA health infrastructure – they lacked enough in-house medical personnel to effectively treat and contain the epidemic. The most recent data from these three countries indicates they held no more than 0.1 physicians per 1,000 citizens (Soergel, (2016).

<sup>93</sup>Former Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) <https://www.uneca.org/>.



As such human capital flight is usually regarded as an economic cost, given these direct and indirect sources of loss, paralleling capital flight, which refers to the same movement of financial capital out of the region – resource flight. The impact of the high and alarming rate of resource flight in SSA is glaring and obvious – well beyond the most obvious of denying opportunities to the masses of SSAs. The loss of financial capital flight through the various mechanisms impacts upon the region's GDP, reduces its tax collection base and access to monetary reserves to provide for its citizens. It bolsters the power of local corrupt elites, and in so doing enhances their ability to manipulate government policies to advance their interests above those of their countrymen. Similarly, not only does brain drain starve the continent of valuable human resources and slows capacity building, additionally the cost incurred to the state represent a loss, compounding the economic stagnation in the region. Together the phenomenon of resource flight continues to insidiously impede SSA development. As the trends for both capital and human capital flight seem not to be abating, the consequences of resource flight will continue to threaten and obstruct developmental progress in SSA for future generations.

### **Political Legacies of the Imperial Project**

The political mechanisms function as catalysts to further the economic goals and objectives of imperialism. Access and control of territories and ultimately resources are fundamental to the imperial project. Therefore, the imposition of weak states in SSA is essential to ensure a peaceful and favorable climate that allows for the fulfillment of these objectives. The policies, institutions and structures that stabilize the political

environment, however, continue to have repercussions on poverty and underdevelopment opportunities in SSA as I analyze below.

### **Authoritarian Leadership Structures/Leadership Challenges**

Dictatorships, one party rule, coups, and counter coups have been prominent features of recent SSA history. Since the era of independence, SSA has experienced more than 200 successful and attempted military coups (Ben Barka & Ncube, 2012). At the height of political instability, over half of SSA regimes, according to Sandbrook (1985) and Chukwudi (2013), were either military or quasi-military – coming to power after a coup. Furthermore, the push for democratization as part of the neoliberal state has resulted in the practice of “the long-serving ruler who invokes constitutional provisions to suit his ends and perpetuate his stay in power” (Ferim, n.d., p.26). Rulers who do this embody the concept of authoritarian leadership.

The perpetuation of such authoritarian leadership structures has foundations in Hierarchal Leadership<sup>94</sup> structures established to ensure political stability to support of the imperial project, as I detail in chapter 2. However, in order to impose unpopular policies on the populace, the imperial project requires the presence of strong and effective leadership. The strongman policy was adopted.<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, in this symbiotic relationship, in exchange for institutionalizing the imperial project, local strongmen are overlooked by the neoliberal mechanisms as they manipulate the socioeconomic and

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<sup>94</sup>I name these structures in Chapter 2 as Institutions comprising of the IMF, World Bank, WTO & the ICC; Military Presence and/or Interventions & Defense Agreements & Strongman Leadership/Presidents for Life.

<sup>95</sup>President Eisenhower enacted the “Strongman Policy” during the Cold War.

political dynamics of their nations to hold on to power. The concept and practice of ‘local strongmen’ and ‘presidents for life’ I argue are in tandem the foundational barrier to the twin problems of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. All the other legacies of colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism I have identified in this dissertation can be constrained with effective leadership at the helm.

In other words, although SSA leaders are eager to assume power and serve in perpetuity. According to Ammeter et al (2002), their actions and behaviors, once power is gained, are not consistent with effective leadership. They are rather “dysfunctional” given their proclivity to focus on self-serving behaviors. Although ‘functional’ or beneficial for the leader given that their interests are served, this satisfaction however comes at the expense of the served. A prerequisite for effective leadership then requires that leadership behavior must be driven by the interests of at least one key constituent, as opposed to purely self-serving objectives. Therefore, a leader’s “behavior must be functional for one or more of the constituencies he or she represents to be considered leadership” (p.767). Alas, this reality is woefully absent and lacking but nonetheless replete with grave consequences for SSAs.

For instance, to consolidate power for life, unqualified but loyal individuals – sycophantic followers who are evidently unable to offer critical perspectives to the socio-economic issues facing the nation – are awarded strategic positions within governments (Sandbrook & Barkar 1985; Mabogunje, 2000), as well as given access to other official benefits such as loans, contracts and other plush jobs. As such the practice of “patron-client relationship, largely based on familial and ethnic loyalties” (Meier and Rauch

2000, p. 67) as well as cliques from the national elites and the ruling class (Anseeuw et al., 2012) has become the governance norm in SSA. On the other hand, however, those citizens who seek positive systemic changes are ostracized, imprisoned, exiled or are forced to emigrate leaving behind a static idea pool within the governance structure. Bates (2003) agrees that “by frustrating those who would seek fundamental changes, governments remove proposals for comprehensive reforms from the political agenda and forbid organized efforts to alter the collective fate of the disadvantaged” (p. 19). These dissenters, who are the much-needed human resources and manpower of SSA, are subsequently reduced to refugees, political prisoners or make up part of the brain drain phenomenon from SSA.

Also, the desire on the part of SSA strongmen and presidents for life has given rise to another significant consequence; that of the prevalence of gerontocracy – literally, rule by the old ones in SSA. As I have mentioned, to guarantee their president for life status, systematic acts of violence as embodied in the Machiavellian doctrine are normalized with SSA leadership. However, whilst “in the past you could get away with imprisoning and killing everyone,” said Ugandan lawyer and poet Kabumba Busingye, “now it has become much more difficult to be a dictator” (Fallon, 2016, para. 1). The establishment of judicial apparatus such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other bodies has opened up possibilities for some victims to seek redress and bring some perpetrators to justice<sup>96</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup>Individuals such as Charles Taylor the former Liberian president who had fallen foul of the imperial project was called to account in the ICC for his role in the Sierra Leone Civil War and is currently serving a fifty-year jail time. Likewise, former president of the Democratic Republic of

Most of the constitutions of SSA nations grant immunity from prosecution for leaders only whilst in office. Also, diplomatic privileges and immunities make it less feasible for serving leaders in office to be called to account<sup>97</sup>. Nevertheless, the emerging possibility of being held accountable for their actions once local strongmen leave office is a catalyst for the desire to retain power in perpetuity – until they die. As such, in contrast to their population, SSA Presidents are two generations older than their voters. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2015), forty-three per cent of Africa's billion citizens are under the age of 15 whilst seventy percent are under thirty. In contrast however, nearly all of the region's leaders fall within the category of the oldest three percent of SSA population<sup>98</sup>. In this generation chasm, Moss & Majerowic (2012) find Africa with 43.3 years the largest age gap between the ages of leaders and voters as compared to the 16.2 years for Europe and North America. Gerontocracy in SSA leadership indeed raises the credible and logical conclusion that these staggering generation gaps translates into a total lack of understanding and disconnection from the needs of the population that they purport to serve. Such an acknowledgment then follows with the logical conclusion that these presidents who are out of touch with the needs of

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Congo (DRC) Jean-Pierre Bemba, is facing eighteen years for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

<sup>97</sup>For example, in 2009 an arrest warrant was issued for Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, as a sitting head of state, the warrant is still outstanding.

<sup>98</sup>President Mugabe of Zimbabwe is ninety-two and President Biya of Cameroon will be ninety-one if he goes on to win another seven-year term.

their constituents poses major hindrances to addressing the poverty and underdevelopment challenges in the region.

Another emerging implication of the practice of strongman-president for life is the phenomena Zakaria (2008) terms “illiberal democracy”. That is rather than embody the spirit inherent in the democratic process, elections are perfunctory in that “democratically elected regimes, often ones that have been reelected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power and depriving their citizens of basic rights and freedoms” (p.22). Indeed, according to the dictates of political democratization of the neoliberal state, there have been a plethora of elections held in SSA. However, I contend that these electoral processes are undeniably ‘illusions of democracy.’ Rather than act as a catalyst for change, these sham elections and victories are now used as covers to legitimize and sanction repressive behaviors, because “in the past there was rule by decree, abolishing courts and parliament. Now you keep them, you have elections once in five years but you arrange the system to make sure that you always get your way,” said Busingye (Fallon, 2016, para. 4).

This lack of change to the status quo ensures that issues of civil rights (adherence to the rule of law and access to public services such as education, health care and housing), even though enshrined as a core tenet of liberal democracy are ignored. As a result, SSA leadership continues to thrive on weak democratic systems characterized by low levels of accountability and transparency (Herbst, 2008). Furthermore, the repressive, brutal, undemocratic, unequal and authoritative rule practiced by SSA leadership against their citizens (Heleta, 2007), juxtaposed with the glaring realities of poverty and under

development these same communities must endure, are creating tension, which if not adequately addressed have the potential to fragment into wars, conflicts and violence. Also, the violent repression of dissent from political opposition forces combined with flagrant human right violations and genocide encourage the fermentation of discord that leads to the possibilities of the proliferation of coups on the part of dissenters. Wars and civil strife in turn present their own particular but significant challenges to SSA nations as I have detailed in the section below; whilst frequent and violent changes in leadership induced by coups stifle the progress of a nation's development agenda as each new regime assumes power with particularized agenda that usually undermine continuity the vision of the previous government.

### **Wars, Conflicts, and Violence**

Nation states as the basis of modern society according to Bauman (1998) is characterized by the tripod of military, economic and cultural control over a particular territory guaranteed the executive and legislative sovereignty of the nation state. Nevertheless, within SSA as the state was created before the nation post independent nations continue to struggle to create a "commonwealth of like minds" (Rotberg, 2004) and is failing to take advantage of the tripod as suggested by Bauman above. Instead, inter and intra wars, conflict, and violence have been prominent features of recent SSA history<sup>99</sup>. Although wars are considered political expressions, the root causes of these

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<sup>99</sup>There are an estimated 100 active territorial disputes in SSA (Oduntan, 2015); more than twenty major civil wars since 1960, whilst Burundi (East Africa), Liberia (West Africa), Angola (Southern Africa) and Somalia (Horn of Africa) are undergoing serious internal armed conflict (global Secutiry.org) as well as interference from their neighbors Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda, who are all apparently engaged in the country as a means of stability.

violent instabilities in the region, I argue as Zeleza (2008), are the culmination of the political and economic and sociocultural legacies of imperialism. Zeleza states that “many postcolonial conflicts are rooted in colonial conflicts. There is hardly any zone of conflict in contemporary Africa that cannot trace its sordid violence to colonial history and even the late nineteenth century” (p. 1). These wars and conflict in SSA directly contribute to poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.

The portioning of SSA during the Berlin Conference paid no heed to the existing ethnic, geographical, religious, political or linguistic boundaries or affinities.

Homogenous groups were divided into different countries based on artificial and arbitrary lines<sup>100</sup>. Land dispossession and forced migrations frequently resulted in tribes with either a history of conflict or hatred and enmity relocated together (Sandbrook & Barkar, 1985). Nevertheless, these indigenous SSAs were administered independently of each other by the colonial powers. For example, treaties and agreements were made independently with local leadership of the different people, not as a collective with those people who live in the territory. At independence however, as Mbeki (2005) notes, the newly formed countries were made up from an amalgamation of the different and multiple identities unified into a state or tribes dispersed into multiple states. Since independence however,

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<sup>100</sup>For instance, Olaosebikann (2010) states that in West Africa, the Akan speaking peoples were divided between Ghana and Ivory Coast, the Ewe ethnic group has also been split between Ghana and Togo while many Yoruba are found in the Benin Republic and Nigeria. The Lozis of Southern Africa are scattered between Zambia, Northwest Zimbabwe and Northern Botswana; ethnic Somalis can be found in Somalia, eastern Djibouti, the Ogaden area in Ethiopia and parts of Northern Kenya.



these national and international arbitrary borders combined with issues of identities, tribal and ethnic particularities, access to natural resources, the failure of SAPs have been sources of internal and external conflict in SSA (Yoon, 2009 ; Olzak, 2010).

Likewise, tensions and conflicts are present in Settler colonies of Zimbabwe and South Africa over land redistribution. For example, in South Africa, The Colonial Land Act of 1913 formalized the systematic dispossession of Africans from their productive historical lands<sup>101</sup>. The post-apartheid government promised a gradual land reform to reverse the 1913 land use patterns by distributing land as a strategy for alleviating poverty and underdevelopment (Moore, 2010; Aliber & Cousin 2013). Nevertheless, only about 8 percent of commercial farmland redistributed over 18 years versus the 30 percent over 5 years initially targeted (Aliber & Cousins, p.140). Marais (1998) argues that this slow pace of reform is an apparent political compromise that nevertheless ensures the continued control of power and wealth to the white minority. Although South Africa has yet to descend into conflict like in other areas, there are indications of simmering tensions. For example, the racial violence in 2009 is largely attributed to the failure of implementing a sustainable land policy to reduce the poverty and under-developmental realities of its indigenous populations; for according to Moore (2010), with expectations so high, progress so slow, and livelihoods at stake – is combustible.” The issue of land

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<sup>101</sup>According to Jooste (2013), more than eighty percent of South African poor were banished to arid land or ‘bantustans’ which were of no significance economic value or benefit. Consistent with other settler colonies in SSA, the ownership of land maintained the socioeconomic status of black South Africans. Lahiff (2007) summarize that at the end of apartheid in 1994, 86% of total agricultural land were controlled by the 10.9% white minority population and further concentrated in the hands of approximately 60,000 owners. Over thirteen million South Africans, the majority of them poverty-stricken, remained crowded into the bantustans’.

reform has surfaced again. President Zuma in support of the Africa National Congress's (ANC) position announced the imperative to accelerate land redistribution and land reforms (Gumede & Mbatha, 2017).

Likewise, the dynamics inherent in the neoliberal globalization further exacerbates the tensions within post-colonial nations. Its demands have significantly increased corporate penetration and dominance of the continent's resources to the neoliberal mechanism (foreign MNCs and TNCs, in close collaboration with their respective governments and enforcing agencies) with profound negative consequences for SSA and its peoples. The insatiable appetite for resources, markets and ultimately profits has transformed MNCs and TNCs to what Dare (2001) refers to as "economic predators" in the region. In their quest for continued and interrupted access, the neoliberal mechanism routinely engages in political and thereby socio-economic manipulations of already fragile dynamics inherent in SSA nation states resulting in wars, conflicts and violence. Indeed, the epicenter of some of these wars and conflicts are in areas where corporations have interests<sup>102</sup>. Again Dare (2001) clarifies that manipulations include supporting dictatorial leaderships and regimes, covert and overt support for or turning a blind eye to conflicts involving warlords, guerilla fighters resulting in a proliferation of weapons and ammunitions at the disposal of young idle and disgruntled Africans to be used at will.

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<sup>102</sup>Bowie (2013) & Cartalucci, (2014) conclude that access to the oil fields of South Sudan is the ultimate genesis to this civil war between North and South Sudan, as Western MNCs seek to wrest control from Chinese MNCs.

These wars and conflict in SSA directly contribute to poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Not only are they raising humanitarian concerns, but also bringing many of its economies to the brink of collapse given the routine diversion of resources from social and economic investment to be recurrently spent on the war effort and the subsequent impact on the local market economy, health and social services, transportation and communication systems. Indeed, research on impact of wars on economies shows that, on average, non-warring African countries experienced an increase of 13% in GDP annually, while the warring countries experienced an 8% decrease (Ammons, 1996). In the agriculture sector for example (an area which many Africans are involved in); factors such as transportation, reduced labour as a result of casualties and military absorption, and landmines are all important considerations that hinder the output and subsequent growth of the sector in conflict zones. Between 1970-1997, Cramer (1999) reports that in war torn countries, losses in SSA agricultural production amounted to a total of some \$52 billion; in other words a thirty percent of total production output. Furthermore, Gourevitch, (1999) states at the height of the war in Rwanda that a “year’s tea and coffee harvests had been lost, and vandals had left all the tea factories and about seventy percent of the country’s coffee-depulping machines inoperable” (p. 229).

Likewise, according to Afolabi (2009), the “destruction of lives and property, the internal displacement of people, a region-wide refugee crisis, poverty and disease, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, human and drug trafficking, illegal exploitation of natural resources and banditry” (p. 25) are all a direct consequence of the

ensuing violence in SSA. Whilst the UNHCR estimates a slight decrease in the number from 15.1 million in 2014 to 14.9 million in 2015, the phenomenon of displaced people negatively impacts on the local administrative infrastructure as well as that of neighboring countries that must bear the brunt of the influx of refugees within their own fragile systems. On the other hand, citizens who are displaced and dispossessed are the vital human resources needed for upholding the development of their communities by engaging in education, agriculture, and manufacturing as well as in private and governmental sectors.

### **Sociocultural Legacies of the Imperial Project - Education**

Sociocultural factors are those set of traditions, belief systems and habits that characterize a population. On the other hand, education is fundamental to the social transformation of societies. As such, civilizations have all used education as a means to reorient local knowledge bases into that which is conducive to its needs. Therefore, I use the term sociocultural mechanism to indicate the manners in which these lifestyles, customs and value systems are imparted through the education process. As I have stated previously, the possibilities of education can be used negatively or positively within societies. From my analysis in previous chapters, I conclude that imperial education is an example of a negative use to dominate the peoples of SSA. The role and purpose of this education was the use of education as a sociocultural mechanism to groom Africans to be subservient to imperial dictates. In other words, imperial education has been used to institute ways of knowing in a hegemonic manner to promote the goals of imperialism.

Thus, imperial education continues to influence the poverty and underdevelopment realities in SSA, as I examine in the following paragraphs.

### **Elitist Education**

A class based elitist system of education remains a recurrent feature in imperial education. For example, even though the goals of the civilizing missions of the missionaries and the colonial state might have differed slightly, the processes and structures to achieve these goals remained consistent. The missionaries aimed to train an elite class of Africans to be well versed in Christian theology and practices so these new Christian elite could transfer these pieces of knowledge within their African communities. Education from the perspective of the colonial state was likewise to transform a group of Africans into '*evolues*', '*assimilados*' or 'Been Tos' to serve as low level functionaries in the colonial government, and also to assume the leadership roles in the eventuality of independence and as such ensure the continuation of imperial modes of political, socioeconomic and cultural governance. Nevertheless, access to further and higher education was in most instances very restrictive and limited for the rest of the masses of Africans in the urban and rural areas. This restriction was based on a racially stratified view by the colonialist of the inherent backwardness of the African peoples. Also, poignant however, as was reasoned by the colonial powers, was the existential threat to the colonial power structure of a highly educated and trained African populace that might challenge the status quo. Therefore, basic education in the form of the Adapted Curriculum for the masses of African workers was meant to guarantee minimal exposure to western values without the immersion or assimilation consideration given to the elite

educated Africans<sup>103</sup>, whilst the Academic Curriculum was reserved for the smaller class of elite Africans.

Furthermore, imperialism as an extractive institution (Acemoglu & Robinson 2012), did not allow for significant investments in the spaces it is instituted. Therefore, even though the education system was intended to serve the values of imperialism, colonial powers did not invest in education. Rather, Africans were expected to self-finance (Ball, 1983) their education. Students identified as ‘smart’ were streamed to receive elite education and could sometimes receive free education. In most cases however, only those who could afford to pay were allowed to progress within the education system. This policy further reinforced the inequality of access to education and thus the nature of the pyramid structure of education.

The same reality persists in neoliberal globalization. When education is subjected to marketization, it induces a profit mode of operation, which offers services only to paying consumers, customers and clients. The user fee introduced in all levels of education within SSA ensures the continuation of the elite system of education. The Bridge International Academies<sup>104</sup>, which operate in some countries in SSA, is able to attract families who can afford their services. In government run schools, even though the policy of Education for All (EFA) guarantees free basic education through the Universal

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<sup>103</sup>The origins of the pyramid education structure of colonial education, that is the Academic and Adapted colonial pedagogy which remains intact today in education systems in the entire SSA is a testament to this reality.

<sup>104</sup>The private education company that some SSA nations have outsourced their primary level education to.

Primary Education (UPE), economic reality makes this provision inaccessible for most Africans. Thus, tuition as well as other miscellaneous charges prevents low income families from sending their children to school. Furthermore, as the EFA disregards the necessity for higher education, universities have become mostly private entities that cater to fee paying students. Mazrui (1997) confirms that indeed students who defaulted on tuition payment and were subsequently deregistered in 1996 from Egerton and Moi universities in Kenya were from poor families. This status quo, whereby only those students who can afford financially afford user fees have access to education, continues unabated in SSA.

This system of elite education has severe repercussions on the poverty and underdevelopment crisis in SSA. The effect continues to destabilize the social cohesiveness of the traditional SSA societies particularly by producing “three different nations in one country unable to communicate effectively with each other” (Woolman, 2001, p. 29) thereby lacking a coherent front to tackle the ravages of poverty and underdevelopment in their midst. These nations are the ‘*evolues*’ or ‘*assimilados*’ well versed in the imperial traditions, but with severed ties to their local African communities, the ‘half educated’ who are neither comfortable in their indigenous cultures nor understand the ways of the educated elites and finally the “*non-evolues*” or the ‘*indígenos*’ who have not been exposed to imperial education and therefore do not understand the ways of the ‘*evolues*’ or the half educated. However, both the educated elites and the half-educated are victims of an irrelevant imperial curriculum which have resulted in the cultural-educational dissonance in the region.

## **Irrelevant Curriculum**

Pre-colonial education was based on an organic process, which ensured that learning activities correlated with the desired outcomes for the role and purposes of education as determined by members of precolonial African societies. As such precolonial pedagogy functioned through the application of a holistic curriculum to ensure relevant information was passed inter-generationally, and also so individuals and societies could rise up to find solutions for current societal challenges. Imperial education ruptured this organic process and introduced instead an inorganic system. The Colonial and Neoliberal Pedagogies were partial to the aims and goals of colonialism and neoliberal globalization respectively, which entailed a redirecting of the curriculum to serve the values of imperialism and therefore the needs of SSA continues to be neglected (Busia, 1964)

The consequences of an irrelevant curriculum remain significant for the poverty and underdevelopment reality in SSA. For example, the academic disciplines are still ‘bookish’ in content and not consistent with the information needed to address the region’s poverty and underdevelopment crisis. A significant number of Africans graduate in disciplines that can be considered irrelevant within the SSA context and are consequently unable to find suitable employment that ensures mutual individual and societal fulfillment. These unemployed graduates combined with the half and non-educated Africans become part of the growing restless unemployed youth population. Together these groups of Africans understandably harbor high anti-government sentiments and as such become fertile ground for recruitment as fighters in the outbreak



of wars and other ethnic conflicts with devastating consequences. As ‘soldiers’ in rebel movements, these young Africans are paid, fed and find their sense of purpose and recognition that everyday life does not offer them.

Also, the general approach of imperial education departs from the didactic method inherent in the traditional understanding of the roles and purposes of education. As such, it discards the value and importance of creating inquisitive individuals with the thirst to immerse oneself in intellectual challenge to search and create knowledge (Karpov, 2013). It also leaves little or no room for individuals to engage in critical reflection nor encourages the cultivation of democratic practices or principles of lifelong learning. Such manners of thinking present veritable avenues and spaces for individuals to act as change agents of their lived lives and, by extension, the communities they are inherently part of (Giroux, 2011). Also, imperial education extols the primacy of the neoliberal self which is trained to become absorb in a disposable culture (Bauman, 2001) of consumption and consumerism without reference to the world around. Such dislocating of the African peoples from their organic to an inorganic focus, as a result of imperial education, has resulted in what I term schizophrenic identifications.

### **Schizophrenic Identifications**

Both the Adapted and Academic Curriculum as well the Pacifist Evangelical Curriculum of the colonial pedagogy were evidently successfully implemented given the current mindset of many Africans as amenable imperial subjects, even in the post-colonial era. Agbor et al (2014) notes that in particular France’s assimilation policy implemented through colonial pedagogy created elites in post-colonial Francophone

countries that were unlikely to enter into violent confrontations with their imperial power, but on the contrary, were conditioned to represent the interests of France rather than that of their fellow Africans. The subsequent imprinting of the neoliberal pedagogy has, so far, met with minimal resistance by the populations of SSA whose minds have already been conditioned to the imperial value system. In other words, according to Goodenough (1963), the “standards for deciding what is, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it” (p. 258) are all based on the European sociocultural, political and economic paradigms.

Consequently, whilst the educated elite classes are the traditional gatekeepers and transmitters of culture in most societies, the opposite is true in the case of SSA. Educated Africans according to Mazrui, (1978) “are in cultural bondage.... as cultural captives of the West” (p. 13), are alienated from their African roots and as such become misfits within the cultural milieu. This transformation arises as a result of the breakdown and loss of connection of cultural referents that had prevailed before the restructuring of the European imperial machine (Pwiti & Ndoro, 1999). I liken cultural referents to Pipher’s (2002) “Global Positioning System,” (GPS) that ensures individual and social navigation of identity. The systematic and gradual transformation of such referents, or the “breakdown and a disarticulation of institutional and symbolic mediations from the past” (Sánchez, 2010, p. 71), that facilitated the navigation of standards for individuals and communities at the individual, family, local, national, religious and political affiliations

levels are embroiled in continuous conflicts and change<sup>105</sup>. These cultural breakdowns are producing what I term “schizophrenic identifications” or according to (Annet, 2012) ‘identity confusion’ amongst Africans. Particularly, even though the African educated elite must exist physically within the African cultural milieu, the European mindset still prevails. Blaise Diagne<sup>106</sup> for example, according to Gifford & Louis (1971) expressed in 1921 that “his loyalty to France came ahead of his loyalty to other blacks”. Fanon (1968) refers to these hybrid individuals as dark skin in color, but still white in mind.

I argue that this dysfunctional notion of identity has profound effect on the poverty and underdevelopment crisis in SSA. The educated African elite in setting the political, economic and sociocultural trajectories in their respective nations is programmed to gravitate towards European models even though these models are to the apparent detriment of their fellow citizens. For example, as discussed in previous sections in this chapter and also in chapter three, the Education for All (EFA) does not work to the benefit of the educational needs of SSA; overspecialization does not contribute to economic growth in SSA economies and the inadequacies inherent in the ‘knowledge problems’ as I analyze above makes the conceptualization of poverty as well as the quantifying of data equally challenging. Similarly, the policy of *FranceAfrique* gives France more leverage than benefit to its former colonies. Also, Fanon’s argument

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<sup>105</sup>For example, the African concept of community or communal living enforced by indigenous education has been eroded and supplanted by that of individualism or the neoliberal self creating tensions within the entire African social fabric.

<sup>106</sup>A prominent francophone West African elite who became Senegal’s black deputy to the French Parliament between 1914–1934.

can also be perceived through the prism of human resource flight whereby lack of love and ties to their homeland result in disillusioned young Africans who are eager, keen and even desperate to leave the continent in search of better opportunities overseas rather than remain and invest talents and skills in their countries of origin.

Furthermore, abandoning the African traditional mores of communalism by the educated elites wreaks havoc on African traditional societies whereby a majority of Africans still live at the village, tribal or rural level. Since colonial times, education is considered an investment at the family and community level<sup>107</sup>. The neoliberal self hinders the elites to engage in personal, economic involvement, lobbying or investing at the extended family or community level, and thus is incapable of addressing the poverty issues in these communities. Most destructive, however, is the internalization of the hidden curriculum of imperialism. This curriculum teaches that one can engage with impunity in the use of violence to achieve political and economic gains, become susceptible to corruption, cheating, dishonesty and other vices to satisfy the consumption and consumerism patterns of the individual as inherent in neoliberal pedagogy. These attitudes and ways of interacting with the world help explain the pattern of resource flight, wars and conflict that pervades SSA.

As one can deduct from the above representation imperialism's mental and cultural domination has direct consequences on the alleviation of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA societies. Firstly, this hegemonic control does not allow

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<sup>107</sup>Villages and communities will pull together resources to educate individual/s from their tribe or community. This was regarded as an investment with the expectation that once the individual/s obtain their education, they will in turn return to make investment in their community.

Africans to engage in substantial critical reflexive thinking about the encompassing nature of poverty and underdevelopment within the region. Furthermore, it hampers the flexibility and confidence of Africans to draw upon existing indigenous knowledge, but at the same time desensitizes the educated elite to the imperative of producing new knowledge base. Rather, the Eurocentric paradigm inculcates in Africans the tendency to regurgitate ideas that continues to prove irrelevant within the context of SSA, hence prolonging the dire conditions of its citizens.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter I demonstrate the manner in which the structures and mechanisms of imperialism impact SSA. I divided the chapter into three sections, each addressing the political, economic and sociocultural legacies of the imperial project. By threading the connections with salient points from chapters two and three, I establish that indeed each of these multiple legacies are not only fluid and inextricably interconnected, but together continue to etch indelible and negative residual consequences for the continent of SSA. In chapter 5, I will discuss from critical perspective these aspects of the imperial project.

## CHAPTER V

### THE IMPERIAL PROJECT THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL THEORY, CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, AND POST-COLONIAL THEORY

#### **Introduction**

Since independence, Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) has experienced a prolonged poverty and underdevelopment crisis. As such, each generation of Africans since independence has lived with the reality of lower standards of living than that of the previous. These include for example, lack of basic access to quality of life and economic opportunities, thereby creating and sustaining conditions for a “prolonged developmental crisis” according to Takeuchi & Aginamio (2011). SSA poverty and underdevelopment travails are incompatible with its human and natural resources potential, documented since the onset of imperial encounter (Bond, 2007).

In this dissertation, I am defending my claim that the uninterrupted imperial project through its inherent structural attachments - colonialism, decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization - perpetuate this prolonged poverty crisis. That is, even at independence, imperial powers continue to implement economic, political and sociocultural mechanisms albeit in nuanced manners, with the fundamental objective of continued access, control and exploitation of the economies of SSA. Furthermore, I am arguing that Africans have not had the opportunity to collectively and significantly interrogate not only the exploitation inherent within the structures of imperialism, but also the role Africans, whether actively or passively, play in

perpetuating this status quo. This is because the imperial education system within the continent has rendered citizens incapable of engagement with the dynamics of poverty, underdevelopment as well as the connections and realities of the imperial project in a critical manner; thereby compounding the fate of many Africans. Therefore, I explore the possibilities of critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory to better understand these concepts.

In chapter two, I examined the political and economic structures as well as the mechanisms which ensure the imperial project, whilst in chapter three I discussed the evolution of education as a sociocultural mechanism of imperialism. In chapter four I established continued legacies of the imperial project in SSA by weaving the connections with salient points from both chapters two and three. In this chapter, I further the analysis by applying critical lens to the ideological concept of imperialism, as well the varied manners and ways succeeding Sub Saharan Africans (SSA) themselves have interacted with this concept, which continue to exert such an indomitable presence in their reality. Such scrutiny within these perspectives allows me opportunities for a subsequent reframing of the understandings currently attached to them. It is my hope that critical understandings will provide a foundational base and possibilities for action on the part of Africans as well as those groups and individuals united in humanity to foster positive changes within the region.

In the first part of the chapter, I present a summary of the dominant representation of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Next, I commence my critical reframing of the imperial project and its direct influence on the causes of poverty and underdevelopment

in SSA through the contours and relevant tenets of critical theory, critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory respectively as analytical tools for my study.

### **The Uncritical Dominant Perspective of Poverty and Underdevelopment in SSA**

The dominant narrative regarding poverty and underdevelopment in SSA as represented in popular lay understandings as well as institutional and academic discourse is from a predominantly *civilizing mission* or '*la mission civilisatrice*' perspective.

Within these prisms of analyses, the potentials of SSA in terms of its human and natural resources is indeed acknowledged. However, although some Africans benefit from these resources, the uneven ratio of wealth distribution results in the region's classification as the most unequal in the world. As such, SSA's resource possibilities run parallel to the significant magnitude and scale of failure for independent SSA nations and her citizens. Indeed, the African condition as I have shown in my previous chapters of this dissertation is synonymous with wretched governance leading to unconstitutional changes of government; tyranny; corruption; failed states and extensive suffering as depicted by the many brutal conflicts and wars, famine, and foreign aid dependency, infrastructural inadequacies for example lack of access to and basic necessities (healthcare and education), resulting in grinding poverty and underdevelopment (Rukooko, 2010). Whilst these representations are indeed the reality, the prevailing narrative of the *civilizing mission* obscures a theoretical and historical explanation of SSA social conditions.

Within this obscurity, SSA is portrayed in an ahistorical context; that is its history commenced at contact with the imperial powers, thereby negating the regions pre-



colonial empires.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, its post-colonial instabilities are reasoned through essentialist views. For example, SSA's poverty and underdevelopment travails are regarded as a natural original position, while the obstacles to overcoming poverty are located internally in the various 'traditional' characteristics of African societies and economies. On the other hand, its endemic political volatility is attributed to the region's essential features of ethnicity and traditional African culture (Jones, 2005).

The remedy for SSA, according to the *civilizing mission* is firstly to present the idea that SSA nations are totally responsible for their predicament. As such, the moral and ethical obligation of the imperial powers is to continue on the mantle of the white man's burden in order to "save Africa from itself, its leaders, its appetites, and its apparent incapacity for civilization. We give, they take. We're active and entrepreneurial, they're passive and dependent. We help, they're helpless" (Caplan, 2017, p.4). The imperial project thus fulfils these 'moral and ethical' responsibilities through philanthropic, charity and foreign aid activities.<sup>109</sup> However, whilst these approaches make impact through small local projects, they offer no real respite or long-term solutions for those living in abject poverty within the nations of SSA as the foundations that spawns these phenomenon are not adequately interrogated (Kihika, 2009).

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<sup>108</sup>British Historian Basil Davidson in his books *Old Africa Rediscovered* (1959), *Black Mother* (1961) and *The Search for Africa* (1994) wrote extensively on pre-colonial African societies, dispelling the pervasive myth of a primitive Africa.

<sup>109</sup>This is evidenced by for example the proliferation of NGOs and other governmental aid organizations; the Band Aid and Live Aid programs and the various donations requests by other aid organizations.

Particularly these initiatives do not attempt to explain according to Jones (2005) the “specificity of economic conditions, social relations, ideologies and identities, rivalries and tensions as rooted in the social relations and practices of colonial rule, and reproduced subsequently in part through the relations of neo-colonialism and more generally the global capitalist order” (p. 988). Therefore, in the remaining discourse of chapter 5, I present a critical reframing of the civilizing missions’ rendition of SSA’s poverty and underdevelopment with emphasis on the points raised by Jones above.

### **A Reframing**

In the above paragraph, I outlined the prevailing narrative on SSA with regards to the intersection of poverty, underdevelopment and the imperial project. In the following paragraphs, I transition from these dominant uncritical representations by offering a reframing. I firstly give an alternative reality of SSA and next analyze the structures as well as the corresponding mechanisms that uphold poverty and development in SSA through theoretical lens.

### **Reframing Sub Saharan Africa**

Although ignored in current discourse, pre-colonial SSA was replete with organic political and socio-economic institutions that ensured continuity of societies. The region was also developing on par with western civilization prior, but all advances were reversed and local industries stalled by the capitalist incorporation into the global framework by way of imperial contact (Mimiko, 2010). Furthermore, since colonial contact, a plethora of Africans have resisted and continue to contribute alternative narratives in order to dispel the myth of inferiority that has since been attached to the African civilization.

However, these individuals are either co-opted into folds of the imperial project or silenced in various manners. Indeed, if the notion of globalization were to hold true, exchanges of ideas would have resulted in the region sharing and adopting pertinent knowledge and other advances with the rest of the world instead of finding itself subsumed within the wider imperial culture.

However, SSA's human and natural resources is irresistible to the insatiable appetite of the imperial project for these resources. Prasad (2003) confirms that imperialist nations in pursuit of access to resources have linked SSA in "a complex structure of unequal exchange and industrialization that made the colonies economically dependent upon the Western colonial nations" (p.5). These intricate and inequitable connections continue to ensure wealth extraction from SSA, thereby sustaining the capitalist expansion and economies of the Western imperialist nations (Loomba, 1998). This exploitation is identified by critical theorists (Rodney, 1972) as the principle reason for the poverty and underdevelopment experiences in the region of SSA.

The civilizing mission as I detail above, has become the main framework through which the constellation of complex and interrelated practices for wealth extraction of the imperial project is rationalized. The term 'civilizing mission' refers to "the grand project that justified colonialism as a means of redeeming the backward, aberrant, violent, oppressed, undeveloped people of the non-European world by incorporating them into the universal civilization of Europe" (Perwez, 2011, p. 244); in other words, a self-legitimizing discourse that projects 'civilization' as an exclusive western virtue. Nevertheless, the term civilizing mission is used to in current academic analysis to

delineate a particular historical period that ended immediately after the era of mass decolonization. I however, like Hobson (2012) argue to the contrary. I posit that although the manners and tools of implementation are much more nuanced and sometimes obscured, the concept and ideology of the civilizing mission remains alive and well. This new phase of continuity is the mask of the imperial project, which I call the neo-civilizing mission.

In my efforts to reframe the discourse, I will in the proceeding section analyze these colonial and contemporary institutional structures through critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory. I give a brief overview of my understanding of theoretical foundations and proceed to describe the history, contours and relevant tenets of critical theory, critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory respectively and then analyze the imperial project as it applies to SSA.

### **Theories - Overview**

Theories are a heuristic way to make sense of the many possible interpretations of social issues that challenge societies. In other words, theory, according to Weiss (2009), is a “set of statements devised to explain a group of facts or phenomena, abstract reasoning and speculation, or a belief that guides action or assist comprehension in our interactions with the world” (p.76). As such, I understand theoretical and philosophical frameworks of research as structures or a set of relevant theories within which the constructs of a particular research topic can be conceived, explained, and understood. Further still, these frameworks present an opportunity to build upon the existing knowledge base of the phenomena under study. Egbert and Sanders (2014) describes this

iterative process as “an integration of the theoretical concepts that apply to the problem under investigation” (p. 60). In this way, theories are an invaluable tool to understand imperialism and its inherent attachments and their connections to poverty, underdevelopment and education.

My ontological presumptions are rooted in the praxis of social justice. Therefore, I seek to examine the wider and hidden context of issues in the social world as well to unmask power relations by examining its constitution, specifically in examining how the leadership class manipulates power to their benefit and equally the manners in which they continue to dominate others not part of the elite. In my attempt to understand the relationship between the imperial project and its relationship to poverty and underdevelopment in SSA, I have identified critical theory, critical pedagogy and postcolonial theory as the most pertinent analytical tools to understand the dynamics and factors in these concepts I am trying to decipher. I identified the above theories given their interrelatedness when viewed from a social justice perspective. Given the explicit aim of deconstructing the realities prevalent in the social world, there is a confluence within the theoretical foundations of these three identified theories. However, I will indicate and explain overlapping arguments as and when necessary. Also, for the purpose of clarity, I will immediately embark on analyzing the relevance and understanding within the context of the imperial project, poverty and underdevelopment after discussing the history and tenets of each theoretical framework.

Nonetheless, in adopting these critical paradigms, I am aware of their limited applications in the language of current debate to respond to the challenges faced by SSA.

On the other hand, applying these paradigms is an attempt on my part to prompt alternative ways of understanding these issues.

### **Critical Theory**

In the following paragraphs, I examine the history, tenets as applicable to my topic, then proceed to a critical analysis of the Imperial Project, poverty and underdevelopment. I conclude with examining the limitations and possibilities of critical theory to address the predicament of SSA.

**History.** Critical theory's complex and multifaceted history emerged from several generations of philosophers and social theorists from the Frankfurt School in Germany under the auspices of cultural theorists Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Eric Fromm, and Walter Benjamin in the 1930's, with Max Horkheimer in a supervisory role, to later include Habermas in the 1970s. They together challenged the dominant use of scientific method, which was prevalent at that time, to understand social phenomenon and as such sought alternative methodologies and conceptions for social theory research. In particular, they argued that "both social phenomenon and the scientific research methods used to explore them were tied to social and historical contexts that made neither of them neutral or value-free" (Jennings & Lynn, 05, p.16). Furthermore, theorizing in the midst of World War 2 and witnessing the human atrocities inflicted on fellow humans, critical theorists could not stay indifferent to clear conditions of suffering. They sought to understand "why mankind, instead of entering a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism." (Adorno & Horkheimer 1997: xi). In particular, they were keen to understand the system that brought and sustained Fascism, as well as the desire to

comprehend the psychological aspects of oppression and exploitation inherent in the capitalist system (Portfolio, 2008). As such, critical theory departed from the traditional prevailing theoretical concepts, which were heavily focused on the understanding or explaining society, and promoted a social theory emphasizing the use of critique as the preferred method of investigation. Integral to the process of critique, is deconstruction and thereby criticism of oppression and exploitation. The ultimate goal is the constructing of a more just society. Therefore, many theoretical approaches, for example critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory as I will discuss, are rooted within the paradigms of critical theory, given their emancipating tendencies.

**Tenets and application to SSA.** In the following paragraphs, I examine the relevant tenets of critical theory as applicable to my topic.

***Social construction of reality.*** A fundamental tenet of critical theory is recognizing the creation of a socially constructed world; the social construction of reality as named by Berger & Luckman (1966). In this reality, knowledge is not absolute, neutral, objective or value free. Rather, knowledge is an ongoing human production created through human interactions within the cultural, social and political lives, and flows from ideological assumptions shaped by such factors as gender, class, ethnicity, language and religion (Dei, 2011). In this fluid reality, patterns of meanings change in according to the perceptions of society. As such critical theory is concerned with the manners in which these realities are constructed to interrogate the dominant and normalized assumptions these are based on (Prasad, & Caproni, 1997). The process

whereby certain realities become privileged is understood through the tenets of power, ideology, hegemony, discourse or the critique of domination.

***The critique of domination.*** The critique of domination posits that power relationships in a culture determine the trajectory of the construction of reality in any given society. Therefore, critical theory seeks to unmask power relations by examining the constitution of power by specifically examining; who has power, the manner in which power is manipulated to benefit those in power? Gramsci (1971) examined this through what he calls ‘cultural hegemony’ to explain not only the political and economic dominance of the ruling class, but also the complex and effective practices that they adopt to project their own ways of seeing the world as ‘common sense’ for the masses. The continuation of this mode of establishing and maintaining control is subsequently replicated through social and institutional practices (Stoddard, 2007). Also, central to these power relations is acknowledging the concomitant counter-hegemonic movements resistance to the manipulations of the elites waged by individuals and groups that are disenfranchised within the society. As such, critical theory is committed to explaining and interpreting the multifaceted nature of these power dynamics within the totality of society.

***Power dynamics within the totality of society.*** Hence, totality as another core tenet acknowledges the complex and interrelated nature inherent in social arrangements. These relationships although seemingly fragmented nevertheless have intricate and subtle ties to society at large. Thus, in attempting to explain and interpret any given social reality, critical theorists must examine the processes through which these various



splintered but interconnected parts are understood in connection within a larger complex totality. However, a thorough grasp of the larger society is best advanced through interdisciplinary research that includes psychological, cultural, and social dimensions, as well as institutional forms of domination (McLaren and Kinchella, 2002), thereby introducing another key concept of critical theory - that of praxis.

*A commitment to praxis.* Critical theorists not only aim to understand the origins and operation of repressive social structures, but also further a commitment to praxis that will ensure a cessation of oppressive configurations. Praxis can thus be conceptualized as a combination of ideological critique of society backed up with reflective strategies for social change; in other words, “the way humans act out their theoretical versions of the world” (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 9) in an ongoing attempt to unmask systems of oppression and domination.

**Critical analysis - the Imperial Project, poverty, and underdevelopment.** In an area rich in natural resources, human capacity and potential, the troubling circumstances of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA is a contradictory reality. The traditional African conceptualization of the realities for these low standards of living emerges from a cosmological point of view. Within these understandings Africans generally believe that God gave and God can take away. These sentiments are expressed in phrases such as “*Na so God say*” in the lingua franca expression in Sierra Leone or in my language *si Allah jabi*, both translated as By God’s will. A succumbing to their reality in what Freire (1998) describes as “fatalistic quietude”, (p. 92).

Critical theorists however, affirm contradictory understandings to these paradoxes, which engender suffering as “a humanly constructed phenomenon and does not have to exist” (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 12). In this way, poverty and underdevelopment are socially constructed discursive understandings that embody contestations over power and access to resources given that imperial nations are more concerned with wealth extraction from the region.

A critical explication of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA must therefore take into account that the current and past economic practices inherent in the civilizing and neo-civilizing mission have forged ahead to ensure that “circuits of knowledge production” (Magubane, 2008) perpetuates the prevailing narratives of the dominant status quo. Consistent with these false “truth claims” is the construction of negative images about Africans that generates an equally negative ideological conception that characterizes the civilizing and neo-civilizing mission of the imperial project. These reified images of Africans facilitate and makes palatable the extractive relationship that continues to typify SSA relationship with the imperial project. In particular, it constructs an atmosphere that is conducive to allowing and defending the negative realities of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.

In a unique analysis, Yapa (2006) agrees that poverty is not an economic problem but rather a socially constructed phenomenon. Yapa adds that poverty is not experienced by society at large, but within and amongst social groups. Thus, the deprivation caused by poverty and underdevelopment is a socially specific condition; a constructed scarcity. Perceived as such, deprivation is specific to particular excluded social groups. This

reality is persistent for example within the global scene where entire populations of Africans are surrendered to scarcity as a result of the imperial project, while other Africans are living in abundance.

Hence critical perspectives of poverty and underdevelopment within the SSA context must analyze the structures of power and matrix of domination that uphold the deprivations and scarcity in its societies. McLaren and Kincheloe (2007) explain the deconstruction of “issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy; matters of race, class, and gender; ideologies; discourses; education; religion and other social institutions; and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system” (p.90). So, to sustain its power and control over resources, the imperial project institutionalization of poverty and underdevelopment through the imperial project in SSA takes many diverse forms. As I am arguing in this dissertation, the structures of the imperial project in the guise of colonialism, decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization and the corresponding political, economic and socio-cultural mechanisms are fomented to uphold and ensure that the total domination of this African reality endures. Nevertheless, although the structures and implementation of the mechanism of the imperial project changes during the course of time, the extractive agenda remains unchanged. For example, during colonial occupation, the mechanisms were forcefully justified and likewise violently enforced by the colonial administration. Innovative and less nuanced approaches became necessary in post-colonial ‘independent’ SSA. Decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization became the preferred structures of the imperial project, whilst international organizations such as the

United Nations (UN) Organization for Economic Development & Cooperation (OECD) and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) became the designated common sense political, economic and social mechanisms for the imperial project.

A comprehensive critical understanding of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA must then, according to Rage & Hope (2017), be directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity (i.e. how it came to be configured at a specific point in time). Furthermore, it must also factor the manners in which the different facets of society interact to produce and sustain the oppressive structures and mechanism of imperialism within all areas of the region. Indeed, the imperial project cements its control through these avenues. Whilst colonialism was enforced forcibly, these new mechanisms and the policies they prescribe are internationally reified, and Africans in particular are under the impression that these institutions are to help their nations, but when using a critical lens, we see the reverse is the case.

The moral language of aid in the “age of developmentalism” (Shivji (2003, p. 2) instituted in the immediate post-colonial era became an umbrella tool for continued exploitation. The role of these institutions remains to reinforce control of the imperial project by furnishing SSA governments with aid and loans supposedly to rebuild their respective economies since the onset of decolonization. Developmentalism nonetheless spurns not only aid dependency and the loss of self-sufficiency in SSA, but also the debt trap as SSA nations have through the years been incapable of meeting their debt burdens to International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The role of these institutions has subsequently been altered from that of development agencies to debt repatriation and for-

profit entities as well as instituting policies that allow the imperial project unrestricted access to control the entire spectrum of the region – politically, economically and socio-culturally.

Within this new framework, these institutional mechanisms are not interested in promoting or implementing policies to meaningfully address the issues that are pertinent to establishing a sustainable society in SSA, therefore all their endeavors so far have not been successful. Nevertheless, despite the failure, remedial measures such as the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), continue to be implemented unabated. To justify these however, Africans are held entirely responsible for their plight according to the narratives of the neocivilizing mission. In particular Assefa et al. (2001) epitomizes these sentiments by representing the perspective of the IFIs which is basically that “the poor policies adopted by many African governments took much of the blame for the economic malaise” (p. 204). This is negating the acknowledged reality by the imperial project, which requires the presence of strong and effective leadership in order to impose unpopular policies on the populace. The “strongman policy” of the imperial project actively cultivates corrupt and inept authoritarian leadership to further consolidate imperialism. Therefore, concludes Boateng (2014), the conceptualization of poverty in this way, diverts attention from the social forces responsible for it. Also, the intricate connections weaved by the policies of these mechanisms makes it seemingly impossible for SSA to extricate itself from them, given the totality of control in all spheres of society by the imperial project.

However, there are many Africans who, from the colonial era to present times grasped the true nature of the oppressive forces within their societies similar to the conceptions of critical theorists. Although some may not articulate their ideas as such, their commitment to praxis is nevertheless evidenced in the various counter-hegemonic movements that have been established. For example, resistance during colonialism varied from pragmatic peace and cooperation agreements with local colonial administration to minor scuffles and major battleground confrontations with colonial armies (Kalu, 1985). Of course, vocal and active movements<sup>110</sup> to end decolonization occurred after the two world wars, in which Africans were enlisted to fight for the ‘mother country’. Some imperial powers pragmatically granted some SSA nations independence whilst for other Africans, violent and protracted wars of liberation were the avenues for independence.

As the imperial project segued into modern day neocolonialism, Africans from various persuasions continued to express the dire African condition and the factors that contribute to these misfortunes. This is evidenced by the contribution of many distinguished scholars theorizing in varied and distinct manners on a post-colonial thought. Regardless however, the history and perspectives of Africans “remains untold due to censorship and social amnesia enforced in crude or subtle ways” (Bulhan, 2015, p. 245). Censorship and social amnesia is enforced in different modes, but all privileging the narrative of the civilizing mission. According to Bulhan some of these modes entail a media and academic indifference to a parallel story pertaining to SSA. As such, the

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<sup>110</sup>Many pro-nationalist movement contained groups from a cross section of SSA society to include urban workers, peasants, elites and civil servants.

alternative African story seldom appears in print or visual media whilst academia is also selective on knowledge production about SSA<sup>111</sup>. Furthermore, journals and scholars interested in these different representations of SSA are not only marginalized, but are also harassed by repressive regimes and the newly extended global national security state of imperial nations for subversive activities. This results in self-censorship and imposed censorship thereby hindering a veritable discourse on SSA and the manifestations of the imperial project.

**In response to the Imperial Project - limitations and possibilities.** The essence of plurality of critical theory in terms of its ambitious philosophical project and forms of inquiry create potential for tension. In relation to my concept of the imperial project, the swift transition of globalization from the periphery into social theory and political theory academic discourse has furthered tensions in critical theory. Although the current state of globalization and its many discontents (Stiglitz, 2017) mirrors the historical circumstances that birthed ideas of the Frankfurt School, critical theory so far has not particularly contributed to putting forth concrete conceptual groundings to problematize social relations within the wider international relations arena, perhaps under a critical globalization theory (Buzan & Little, 2001). This is so because critical theory is firmly entrenched in its own Eurocentrism or the Westphalian and its accompanying

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<sup>111</sup>Professional journals winnow out these stories; publishers reject manuscripts; and tenure review committees consider it a sign of radicalism or proof of idiosyncratic obsession to excavate a long-forgotten past too uncomfortable to recall.

Eastphobian narratives<sup>112</sup> (Hobson, 2007). Therefore, to be relevant, central ideas of critical theory must undergo a paradigmatic shift to include a critique of capitalism as well as a critique of European culture (Kozlarek, 2001). This dominance and projection of the European culture upholds the imperial project. As such in its current configuration, the contours and parameters of critical theory limit its ability to meaningfully engage with issues of SSA. It is precisely this lack of adequate theorizing by critical theory on issues pertinent to SSA that necessitated the emergence of post-colonial theory.

Nevertheless, critical theory is not moribund. Its inherent flexibility, for example the absence of a precise definition (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) has allowed me the space as I have done in the previous section to engage it as a “powerful participatory approach that engages constituents or stakeholders in a reflective and critical reassessment of the relationship between overarching social, economic, or political systems” (Freeman & Vasconcelos, 2010, p. 8). These emancipatory strategies, offer much hope for improving the SSA condition.

### **Post-colonial Theory**

In the following paragraphs, I examine the history, tenets as applicable to my topic, and then proceed to a critical analysis of the imperial project, poverty and underdevelopment. I conclude with examining the limitations and possibilities of postcolonial theory to address the predicament of SSA.

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<sup>112</sup>The assumption that the West lies at the centre of all things in the world and that the West self-generates through its own endogenous ‘logic of immanence’, before projecting its global will-to-power outwards through a one-way diffusion so as to remake the world in its own image.



**History.** In the aftermath of the imperial wars of World Wars 1 & 2 the colonized peoples of the world that fought to defend their respective ‘mother countries’ demanded independence from colonial rule. Imperial Europe severely impacted economically, politically and culturally by the wars had lost its capacity to retain these direct imperial relationships. Self-autonomous rule was pragmatically allowed over several subsequent decades, albeit under varying circumstances (Miyoshi, 1993). The extractive nature of colonialism was enforced through structures and mechanisms not only for political, economic and militarily dominance, but also cultural and ideological control (Loomba, 1998). Consequently, the unparalleled breadth and scope of western colonization in the history of empire conquests<sup>113</sup> ensured that even after independence these historical and cultural ties still endure. Post-colonial theory therefore is committed to developing a radical critique of the relationships inherent in colonialism/imperialism and neocolonialism (Prasad, 2003). Krishna (2009) informs that the term ‘post-colonial’ was coined by Marxist scholar Hamza Alavi to refer to societies that were once colonized and are now independent, in other words, a primarily geographical term to signify ex-colonial territories

Post-colonial theory emerged in the western academic radar as scholars from former colonies in South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean who had settled into western institutions continued to deconstruct the representations, as well as the ongoing effects of colonization on colonial subjects. In particular, Said’s (1979) foundational text

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<sup>113</sup>Western colonialism lasted for over five hundred years and covered approximately 90% of the globe.

'*Orientalism*', the "Subaltern Studies" at the University of Sussex and Gayatri Spivak's (1988) work on *Can the Subaltern Speak?* were significant contributors to furthering the theoretic framework of post-colonial theory. The Subaltern Studies Collective (SSC) of which Ranjit Guha and Spivak were integral part of was theorizing on the colonizing impulses in India. However, this South Asian focus shifted with the 1988 publication of *Selected Subaltern Studies*, by Oxford University Press in New York and England. Subaltern Studies subsequently morphed from political critique of colonial and postcolonial India to a critical method of understanding post-colonial societies. As such Subaltern Studies marked a rare instance of a set of theoretical formulations that emerged from a third-world society having a palpable intellectual impact on the first-world academy and became integrated into what is now known as Post-colonial Studies.

This new phase of deconstruction of the residual effects of colonialism must be viewed as building upon the foundations of a number of early thinkers, freedom fighters and anti-colonial activists representing the diverse scope of colonial empires<sup>114</sup>, although their work was not allowed to be disseminated until the end of formal colonialism (Miyoshi, 1993). Evidently, the concept of post-colonial theory was prevalent even before the descriptor was attached to it. Similarly, the post in post-colonial does not indicate a rupture with colonialism, nor a lack of engagement with its effects during colonialism. Rather 'post' is to communicate instead as observed by Shohat (1992), an

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<sup>114</sup>Cabral (1973); Césaire (1972); Fanon (1951 & 1962); Achebe (1958); Gandhi (1928, 1938); Kaunda (1967); Kenyatta (1938); Lenin (1947); Lumumba (1963); Nkrumah (1965); Nyerere (1968) and Senghor (1964) as noted by Prasad, (2003).

unambiguous twin process whereby the term post-colonial embraces both the eras of colonialism and post-colonialism. Nevertheless, as African resistance during colonialism did not result in meaningful decoupling within the political and socioeconomic spheres, the movement segues into current times (Krishnaswamy, 2008)

Post-colonial theory emanated from the backdrop of the violent nature of colonialism. The breadth and scope of colonialism has resulted in its varied and distinct legacies. Consequently, although post-colonial theory was initially prevalent within literature theorists have gradually expanded its reach to include other disciplines. As such, it is now inherently interdisciplinary and hybrid, encompassing a diverse range of ideas, theories and as I mentioned above, theorists (Roy, 2008). Methodologically, post-colonial theorists advance a set of theoretical approach that focuses on the direct effects and aftermath of colonization (Hall, 1996), which seeks to subvert the different forms of imperial hegemony that lingers even in post-independence times (Shiva, 2005) by engaging in vigorous critique of assumptions and discursive practices that European nations use to produce, interpret, and evaluate knowledge about non-European peoples (Goura, 2012). Given the heterogeneous nature of post-colonial theory in its interrogation of these assumptions and discursive practices, I discuss in the subsequent paragraphs the three I have identified as most pertinent to my critical deconstructions of the imperial project as it manifests within SSA.

**Tenets and application to SSA.** In the following paragraphs, I examine the relevant tenets of postcolonial theory as applicable to my topic.

***Orientalism.*** Edward Said (1978) challenged the reified dichotomy of the representational practice of the inferior non-western world or the Orient in contrast to the superior western world or the Occident articulated not only in the domain of scholarly writings, but also in everyday popular writing genres. In what is considered a foundational text in current post-colonial theoretical discourse, Said in *Orientalism* highlights the inextricable link between power knowledge and representation. That is, the depiction of the Orient is not constructed in an objective or value- free manner. Rather, as the Orient finds itself powerless to project itself, the more powerful Occident spurred by its own imperial interests can put forth its own interpretations of non-western peoples that will enable it “to manage . . . the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively” (p. 3) in order to justify its dominance and control over the its peoples.

Thus according to Kapoori (2002), Said, *Orientalism* is a systematic “body of theory and practice” initiated by the Occident to construct or represent the Orient (p. 4). Kapoori furthers that ‘theory’ implies Western imperial *episteme*. That is the West’s intellectual and cultural production, including research, writing, ideas, arguments and images. ‘Practice’ denotes the highly productive and influential network of sociocultural institutions and structures that disseminate the information. These include, according to Prasad (2003), learned societies, university departments, scholarly conferences, governmental bodies such as foreign services, diplomatic corps, military establishments

and colonial administrations, as well as museums and the media<sup>115</sup>. The discourse of *Orientalism* has powerful inferences as it has come to be the sole authority for all respectable or scientific knowledge about the *Orient*. Consequently, Said challenged the notion that western scholarship is impartial, autonomous and objective by highlighting its complicity to further the goals of imperialism in its representations of the Orient.

Said argues that for over two centuries, Western knowledge about people who had been colonized was systematically constructed to project the West's innate superiority of its own civilization as distinguished from the inferior and backwardness of the colonized whose peoples and societies are in need of redemption. Such narratives of imperialism, essentializes the core of the 'western self' and the Oriental 'Other'. These specific representations are based on a fictive system of hierarchical binary oppositions of the Occident/Orient (or West/non-West) with corresponding attributes such as active/passive, center/periphery, civilized/savage, developed/undeveloped, masculine/feminine, modern/archaic, scientific/superstitious, and so on (Prasad, 1997).

From these highlighted inferiority depictions of the Orient, it becomes a moral obligation for peoples of the Occident to assume the mantle of responsibility to engage in the *civilizing mission* or '*la mission civilisatrice*' within all spheres of the Orient. Krishna (2009) summarizes that this "white man's burden" can be explained through Said's

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<sup>115</sup>Hegel as cited by Wilks (1971) held the view that Africa is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit and that is why the colonial era should essentially be an age of enlightenment.

understanding of the quotation “The East is a career”.<sup>116</sup> The East represents the British colonial empire or the Orient where young Englishmen can freely traverse and engage in various activities as part of the civilizing mission that will enable them to not only make a mark on the world, but also opportunities for gainful careers that will ensure wealth acquisition, fame and to become men of consequence. On the other hand, the eventual knowledge produced by the civilizing and neo civilizing missions has become the dominant lens through which many in the *Orient* define and make sense of their own societies and personal selves, which in turn has a determining effect in the interactions between self and society.

***Hegemony/subalternity.*** Post-colonial theory parallels critical theory in its aims of disrupting problematic status quos. This is evident in prominent post-colonial theorists of The SSC seamless alignment of their concepts of post-colonial theory to that of critical theorist Antonio Gramsci’s hegemony and subalternity.

Gramsci realized that the dominant bourgeoisie class ruled Europe with the tacit consent of the subordinate masses or the subaltern. The term subaltern is used by Gramsci in reference to any “low rank” person or group of people in a particular society suffering under hegemonic domination of a ruling elite class that denies them the basic rights of participation in the making of local history and culture as active individuals of the same nation - the peasants and workers facing oppression and discrimination by the Italian Fascist state (Louai, 2012). Gramsci was keen to decipher the manners and

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<sup>116</sup>The quotation is from the novel *Tancred* by Benjamin Disraeli who later became Prime Minister of Britain.

methods by which the ruling class sustained such dominance and influence in society. In “Notes on Italian History,” which appeared later on as part of his most widely known book *Prison Notebooks*<sup>117</sup>, Gramsci (1971) explains that the dominant class enforces its rule by force as well as through the realm of ideas. It is the diffusion and popularization of “cultural, moral and ideological leadership of a group over allied and subaltern groups” (p.100) that Gramsci refers to as hegemony and the manufacture of consent. Gramsci argues that to ensure their rule, capitalist systems consists of two overlapping spheres – the civil and political societies. The civil society includes those civic cultural apparatus such as institutions of education, trade unions, the media religious organizations and political parties; whilst the political sphere is made up of public institutions such as the army, police, the government and courts – the state apparatus.

However, the elites represent a minority in society, therefore within the civil sphere, in order to gain their acquiescence; the bourgeois class makes ideological compromises and grants concessions to the advanced subaltern groups (Greene, 2015). Bates (1975) describes this sphere as a marketplace of ideas within which advanced subalterns act as ‘salesmen’ of contending cultures and establish hegemony by promoting and convincing the rest of the masses or the marginal subalterns (Greene, 2015) that the views of the ruling class are the most ‘common sense’ ways of seeing the world, thereby manufacturing consent. The subalterns, although susceptible to dominant ideologies, are at the same time aware of their lived circumstances and can therefore partially perceive

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<sup>117</sup>Gramsci was arrested and subsequently sentenced to twenty years in prison by the Fascist State of Mussolini.

the hegemony. Bates furthers that the state's coercive mechanisms or rule by force is employed as a last resort to discipline those citizens who do not consent or to reinforce the status quo when spontaneous consensus declines.

Such hegemonic imposition induces a mental weakened state of mind and self that does not entertain thoughts of struggle against oppressive conditions. This Gramsci describes as hegemony produced "in the minds of men" from below (p. 367). Nevertheless, Gramsci acknowledges a certain degree of agency amongst subaltern groups and was interested in investigating subaltern consciousness and culture to produce counter-hegemonic narratives. The concept of struggles is vital according to Gramsci. The subaltern class Gramsci concludes is fractious by reason of elite hegemonic control, and it is only through a unified struggle that the subalterns can be able to overthrow the hegemony of the ruling class with their own narratives.

The diversity and inclusivity of Gramsci's deconstruction of hegemony/subalternity enabled the SSC to apply this within the context of post-colonial India to privilege the history of the subalterns. Guha (1988) distinctly refers to a subaltern as the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom described as the elite. The SSC maintain that prior to the formation of the SSC in 1982, the subalterns were marginalized in the social history of India. Instead political discourses or social histories were focused on the elites, and were thus incapable of presenting a veritable history of India. If the subalterns were allowed to articulate themselves without the intermediary of dominant bourgeoisie class, a totally different historiography would emerge. For example, although the elitist movements mobilized



and exploited the energy of subalterns in the clamor for political power during the struggle for independence, the demands of the subalterns never entered into the postcolonial restructuring agenda (Krishna 2009). That is, they were blind to the politics of the people. In short, the SSC conclude that elites in post colonized countries used the subaltern contribution during the struggle for independence for their own benefits. Colonizers were not entirely responsible for the post-colonial dependent state of the colonized.

Spivak's (1988) *Can the Subaltern Speak?* further problematized the discourse on the subaltern. Spivak criticized the tendency to essentialize the subalterns as a homogenous entity. Firstly, they are in reality very diverse in terms of culture, identity, aims, purposes and affiliation. Also, they can only enter official discourse through mediating commentary like that of the SSC. In order to be heard, subalterns must firstly reject, then conform and adapt their indigenous ways of knowing to that of the culture of imperialism. Spivak fully represents this viewpoint with the concept of "tarrying with the double negative" (Krishna, 2009, p. 98). According to Spivak, hegemonic structures whether political, economic or socio-cultural are simultaneously empowering and impoverishing, therefore have to not only be resisted, but opposed, and bent to one's ethical concerns for equality and humanity. Spivak continues that one cannot change these hegemonic structures from without; rather, it is by inhabiting them intimately and working from within that one tries to change them. The West is such a place that a post-colonial cannot not want to inhabit – but which one is obliged to critique or change, "this

impossible ‘no’ to a structure, which one critiques, yet inhabits intimately” (p.82). Spivak considers herself to be a postcolonial individual.

A post-colonial individual is the product of culture of imperialism. It is the linguistic, cultural and epistemological immersion in the life-worlds of the “west” - mediated into the third world by colonialism - that makes the middle classes of postcolonial societies “modern” in any sense of that term. That is to say that the elites or inheritors of the colonial system who are themselves colonized, but are also, at the same time, well versed in the language, culture, politics, institutions and ideologies of the colonizer. These inheritors are well aware of the paradoxical nature of their colonized existence, yet are unable or powerless to disassociate from it. Krisna (2009) describes this state of post-coloniality as a condition that recognizes the privilege of being conversant with the culture of imperialism, knows it as an instance of one’s own colonization, and yet cannot disown it resulting into split and uneasy selves that are neither satisfied nor sovereign in their surroundings.

Citizenship in the post-colonial state is shared with postcolonial individuals and a significant number of other citizens not versed in the culture of imperialism –subalterns. Such a ‘nation’ led by the elite with split and uneasy selves becomes a fractious place; One resides amongst but rarely with one’s countrymen. In such a place, a hierarchical system develops depending on one’s level of comfort within or distance vis a vis the culture of imperialism. The distance from or proximity to this culture becomes the main determinant by which people are classified as sophisticated, desirable and cosmopolitan versus provincial, uncivilized, unsophisticated and backward.

From the above viewpoint, the answer to Spivak's question "*Can the Subaltern speak*"? must be in the negative. It is not that the subaltern cannot or is unable to speak. However, it is rather that the postcolonial individuals, given their formation in the culture of imperialism, are incapable of hearing her when she does venture to speak her mind. Spivak thus concludes that the postcolonial elite's ultimate goal is self-decolonization. As such, this schism between them and the subalterns agitates an urgency for their decolonization; but it is an impossible desire, and yet something that cannot not be desired, impossible but necessary.

***Psychological imperialism.*** The euphoria and rising expectations at the removal of formal imperialism gradually gave way to sustained despair and disappointment. The post-independence promises have not materialized. Instead, the imperial project continues unabated whilst Africans seem incapacitated to challenge the status quo. This is so because as explained by Bulhan (2015) "colonialism left behind enduring legacies—including not only political and economic, but also cultural, intellectual, and social legacies—that keep alive European domination" (p. 241). Whilst the pioneers of liberation in Anglophone SSA highlighted the political, economics and material or the objective realm in the aftermath of colonialism, Francophone activists articulated on the subjective or the human reaction to the oppression and the exploitation inherent in imperialism (Young, 2016). However, whilst key concepts such as 'other', 'savage', and 'native' in post-colonial theory (Ashcroft et al, 2007) signify these negative effects, I use the expression psychological imperialism as a unified umbrella term to represent the anti-colonial liberationist critique formulated to emphasize that psychological effects of

imperialism that are manifested on both the colonizer and the colonized. Memmi's (1965) foundational text of postcolonial theory analyzes the psychological impact of colonialism and refers to this relationship as "portraits of the two protagonists of the colonial drama and the relationship that binds them" (p. 189). Other post-colonial theorists such as Césaire (1972), Fanon's (1968 & 2008), wa Thiong'o (1988) and Nandy (1983) have all contributed to analyzing the concept of psychological imperialism.

The genesis of psychological imperialism is the intense imperative on the part of the colonizer to establish and maintain dominance over the colonized. This is achieved by establishing a psychological order of master/slave relationship. In this scenario the master projects a superior racial and cultural superiority, whilst the slave simultaneously denuded of their cultural patterns are subsequently assigned a violent subhuman nature that necessitates them to be 'civilized' into the culture of the master. Therefore, racism and terror are the hallmark of colonial institutions as the colonizer exerts dominance. Nevertheless, these violent processes are internalized by both the master and slave. Fanon (1968) refers to this interiorization as an actual psychosis, whereby the "negro enslaved by his inferiority, the white man enslaved by his superiority alike behave in accordance with a neurotic orientation" (p. 60), altering the possibilities of recognizing the humanity in each other.

Particularly, in examining the psychological effects on the colonizer as a result of the racism and violence unleashed upon the slave, Memmi (1965) presents a severe critique. According to Memmi, the colonizer is an illegitimate usurper who enjoys unearned privilege and superior status at the expense of the dispossession and

disempowerment of the slave. This privileged position is in contrast to the reality in the mother country where “he would go back to being a mediocre man” (p. 105). Memmi identifies two diverse ways in which the colonizer rationalizes this place of privilege.

The “colonizer who refuses” (p. 63) recognizes the true nature of violence and oppression in the imperial system. Such sensibilities may prompt the refuser to criticize or engage in acts of resistance against the system. However, these individuals are aware of the advantage that imperialism bestows on them and thus do not intend to overturn the systemic tools of oppression. Thus, refuser’s acts of benevolence in critiquing the imperial system are limited in scope. As a result, they are embroiled in a constant conflicted psychological mindset, given the enormous challenges to reconcile the role of a refuser and that as a perpetuator of the system. The refusers’ acts of resistance can be identified through Nandy’s (1983), *The Intimate Enemy*. Nandy observes that ideological colonialism is the second colonization carried out not by violent colonialists but instead by “well-meaning, hard-working, middleclass missionaries, liberals, modernists, and believers in science, equality and progress” (1983: xi).

On the other hand, a ‘colonialist’ is one who embraces their place of privilege, does not consider the impact of their role on local communities and is most eager and vigilant to defend and perpetuate the system. A colonialist may be a well-respected individual but can all the same sanction violent acts to ensure the system endures. To self-legitimize and rationalize the economic and cultural supremacy, the colonialist as Memmi writes, “endeavors to falsify history, he rewrites laws, he would extinguish memories. Anything to succeed in transforming his usurpation into legitimacy” (p. 96).

Existing in such a contradictory state takes its toll on the psyche of the colonialist, who therefore seeks to further justify these violent acts. The justification of the imperial system becomes firmly rooted within the understanding of the civilizing mission.

As for the psychological impact on the slave or the colonized, Fanon (1968) describes that their internalization of the racism and terror of imperialism produces “two dimensions” or “self-division” or what DuBois called “double consciousness”. This is because as mentioned above, the imposition and domination of the colonizer’s ‘superior’ culture as well as the pillaging of indigenous ways of life induces a sense of an inferiority complex within the colonized individual. To mitigate these feelings of psychological inadequacy, this individual rejects their own cultural referents and desperately seeks recognition and acceptance into the colonizer’s superior world by emulating their cultural patterns. Nevertheless, this absorption comes with significant psychological residues given that it is based on dehumanizing of the colonized as well as the loss of a meaningful identity. Césaire (1972) calls this objectifying of the colonized identity “thingification”. I refer to these resulting consequence as schizophrenic identifications.

Likewise, Fanon (1968) refers to this wholesale adoption of the imperial culture as of the donning of white masks over black skins. Building upon the idea inherent in *Black Skin, White Mask*, Fanon developed the concept of the *comprador class*. The compradors are the élites inheritors of the colonial structures at independence but have not engaged in meaningful restructuring of their respective societies at independence. Their black skin according to Ashcroft et al (2007) was ‘masked’ by their complicity within the values of the white colonial powers.

Fanon recognized that this cultural limbo is a psychotic break from one's authentic self and insists that such a rupture must be characterized as a recognizable mental illness. Fanon therefore urged that it was a political and social imperative for independence leaders to engage the masses in nation building that critically coalesced on pre-colonial indigenous values and cultural practices. However, national consciousness once unleashed by the masses must swiftly be followed by social consciousness so citizens are poised to demand accountability from leadership. Failure to do so will result in the entrenchment of the comprador class and the continuation of imperialism with devastating consequences. Furthermore, cultural nationalism will culminate in xenophobia and intolerance as formal imperialism cedes. For as Fanon explains the colonized psyche, haunted by the failure to reject the colonizer will exert violence as a form of self-assertion even on fellow citizens. This is so because the colonized realizes that accommodation to the imperial culture will always result in alienation and dehumanization as the colonizer has no interest in the activities of the conquered.

### **Critical analysis - the Imperial Project, poverty, and underdevelopment.**

Critical theory's limited scope to explain and understand the crisis of capitalism in SSA was the catalyst for academics from the colonized world to theorize a post-colonial theory. In my analysis of poverty and development from a critical theory perspective, I relied on making inferences from its tenets to highlight my points. Post-colonial theory on the other hand allows a reconfiguration of dominant narratives with specificity to the post-colonial experience. For example, Orientalism presents opportunities for critical and unique insights into the SSA dilemma. Orientalism epitomizes the essence of the

civilizing mission in its propagation of a western epistemology grounded in the dichotomy of East/Orient versus a West/Occident. The imperial project has thus succeeded in creating, instituting and sustaining a global Eurocentric paradigm. In this Eurocentric taxonomy of humanity, the ‘European Man’ of the occident is superior in contrast to the orient or the ‘other’ who is inferior. Such compartmentalization places Western civilization at the center and that of the orient as appendages and fodders to be resuscitated according to the needs and convenience of the civilizing mission. As such, SSA political, economic and socio-cultural mechanisms are all oriented towards this inorganic but all-encompassing imperial ideal, which is evidently incapable of addressing issues of poverty and underdevelopment in the areas.

Within the politico-legal framework for example, the imperial project institutes Eurocentric legal systems as accepted norms to further its interests. During colonialism, European laws were established in the orient to annex and ensure control of territories. Laws were also intended to regulate legal relationships and conducts between the various imperial powers or to serve as ‘a code of honor among thieves’ (Jennifer Clarke, as quoted in Roy, 2008, p 324). The Doctrine of Discovery<sup>118</sup> authorized European, Christian countries to explore and stake legal claims to the lands, assets and rights of peoples whom they have ‘discovered’ outside of Europe. The law therefore granted governmental, political and commercial rights to explorers who planted crosses and the flags of their respective nations in the lands of indigenous peoples even without local

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<sup>118</sup>The Doctrine is acknowledged as the first international law principle and is still valid in international and domestic law. For example, Russia evoked the Doctrine by planting their flags on the Arctic Ocean in 2007, whilst China staked its claim in the South China Seas in 2010.



knowledge or consent (Miller, 2011). The Doctrine of Discovery manifested as the partitioning of SSA at The Berlin Conference in 1884-1885<sup>119</sup>. Furthermore, at the end of World War I, the principle of 'trusteeship'<sup>120</sup> in 1919 established by the League of Nations<sup>121</sup> likewise further served to justify imperial control over territories and Africans. Again, consistent with the Eurocentric paradigm, continued possession ignored the reality that Africans had neither invited nor showed much signs of appreciating this European interest in their well-being. All these elaborate measures were explicitly for the benefit of the imperial project, whereby its extractive nature ensured minimal investments in the 'discovered' territories and not focused on the interests and development of the peoples of SSA.

At independence Africans also quickly came to the realization that attempts to institute organic political, economic and sociocultural institutions were futile. It was impossible to reclaim autonomy and seclusion of the pre-colonial era considering their absorption into the Eurocentric paradigm. As such, eurocentrism was also at the forefront during the process of state formation at decolonization. SSA was once again parceled into

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<sup>119</sup>The conference was convened by Germany for interested parties to agree upon rules of colonization in SSA.

<sup>120</sup>Article 22 of the Charter of The League of Nations acknowledged "the principle of 'trusteeship'" and the concept that "the well-being and development" of colonized peoples formed "a sacred trust of civilization"; in other words, they acknowledged the right of colonized people to be granted independence when they were deemed to have sufficiently reached an advanced stage of development. Colonial powers in the meantime were to continue in their role as 'Trustees' and tutors-in civilization for their colonial subjects until such a time as they could take responsibility for their own self-determination (Sluga, 2006).

<sup>121</sup>The precursor to the United Nations (UN).

nation states. The concept of statehood has origins in the peace Treaty of Westphalia<sup>122</sup>, which in 1648 effectively ended the thirty years European wars of religion and established the era of sovereign nation states (Hassan, 2006). The treaty remains central to international law and forms the basis of the UN in its relationships with sovereign nations. However, the European conceptualization of sovereign nation states as applied within the context of SSA is proving to be a “counterfeit reproduction” (Miyoshi, 1993). The formation of modern SSA state apparatus replete with European replicas – national anthem, flags, language, history and culture has yet to convince the liberated Africans of its legitimacy or authenticity even as these entities strive to negotiate the logic and objective of their statehood as a geographic and demographic unit. Whilst a united ‘African’ identity was articulated in the struggle against colonial oppressors, the departure of the imperialist however revealed the fragile composition of state boundaries that does not correspond with linguistic, ethnic, cultural or sectarian realities, which was the result of the arbitrary portioning by the colonial state. These realities in SSA create a deep sense of cacophony and results in inter and intra nation episodes of wars, violence and conflict. Thus, for SSA, the utopian dream of statehood is anything but that.

Of course, Europeans had the luxury of time to work out their differences and realize the dream of statehood, indeed after many centuries. The circumstances and opportunities for African peoples of SSA to create even a semblance of a modern nation state continue to be hampered with relentless overt and covert interference of the imperial

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<sup>122</sup>The treaty guaranteed the principles of sovereignty, equality and non-intervention of one state in the affairs of another.

project hastening the African nightmare. Moreover, post-independent SSA's initiatives or alliances with non-European elements such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)<sup>123</sup>, The African Development Bank (ADB); The African Union (AU), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)<sup>124</sup>; The Lagos Plan of Action and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are eventually sabotaged, weakened and eventually co-opted under the umbrella of European institutions. Consequently, institutions such as the UN and the IFIs continue to proliferate and project their presence within all spheres of SSA.

Colonization further ensured the structural foundation for SSA's subordination into the global European capitalist economic model. Newly independent nations of SSA became immediately embroiled in cold war politics as the imperial project applied measures to ensure that post-colonial states remained tied to the capitalist model. In the post-cold war global reality, imperial powers had embraced neoliberal globalization or the globalization of the economic principles of neoliberalism. This formidable grip of

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<sup>123</sup>The NAM is comprised of 29 Asian and African countries. Their agenda articulated a position of neutrality during the Cold War and to resist the manipulations of the superpowers and western domination in order to maintain national sovereignty, opposition to colonialism and neo-colonialism.

<sup>124</sup>NEPAD is an economic development program of the AU. Its main objective is to institute a vision for accelerated framework for economic co-operation and integration between AU nations.

market fundamentalism,<sup>125</sup> is acknowledged in the Iron Lady's<sup>126</sup> well known 'there is no other alternative' or TINA clause as well as Fukuyama's (1992) 'the end of history'; informing the world of the inevitable and unquestioned reality of neoliberalism as the natural and only possible socio-cultural, economic and political choice available for humanity. As such, SSA's relationship with the Eurocentric paradigm has once again reoriented to operate within this ideology. Neoliberal globalization however from a post-colonial critical perspective poses many inconsistencies and contradictions to address poverty and underdevelopment from an African prosperity perspective.

The development agenda for SSA under neoliberal globalization therefore remains the region must be 'opened up' to allow free marketism to thrive. SSA indebted to the IFIs as a direct consequence of the policies of developmentalism as I explained earlier are obligated to adopt the measures and policies attached to aid conditionalities. This opening of course according to the principles of neoliberalism is frequently implemented in a forceful and violent manner in SSA. Curtis (2016) observes that complete compliance to market fundamentalism is demanded by the MNCs and TNCs. Similar to the collaboration with their respective home governments<sup>127</sup> during the

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<sup>125</sup>As an economic policy, market fundamentalism or neoliberalism emphasizes the efficiency and superiority of the market or a laissez faire market approach implemented through the process of privatization, liberalization and deregulation. Furthermore, other areas of human interactions, for example, political, socio-cultural, ecological are subjected to the propagation with limited interference from government of this economic ideology

<sup>126</sup>The Late Prime Minister of the UK from 1979-1990 and who together with President Regan and Chancellor Kohl of Germany were the pioneers of neoliberal globalization in Europe.

<sup>127</sup>European Missionaries and companies depended on colonial governments for physical security and protection of, even sometimes urging their home governments to engage in punitive military expeditions against recalcitrant communities (Okun, 2014).

colonial era, SSA is once again vigorously policed and surveilled by international bodies controlled by imperial powers to ensure the implementation of neoliberal policies within the political and socio-economic spheres of SSA.

For example, the AU and ECOWAS's co-option into what Castellás (2006) refers to as 'Networked State' or Kowalska's (2010) supranational organizations<sup>128</sup> are entities created to be mostly concerned with the objective process of restructuring the state apparatus to facilitate the objectives of neoliberalism. Those countries as noted by wa Thiong'o (2004) that question or refuse to adhere to these edicts are excommunicated from the international community. A country relegated to pariah status faces significant censure and repercussions. For example, its leaders are deposed and are sometimes indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for war crimes or other charges that the neoliberal state had previously overlooked. Also, there are active manipulations of fragile dynamics inherent in SSA nations that results in conflict and wars; sanctions placed on 'rogue nations', mass capital flight as a result of sanctions and withholding of aid by the IFIS<sup>129</sup>. Although these levels of surveillance ensure SSA's absolute and complete compliance to market fundamentalism, they nevertheless further compound the

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<sup>128</sup>Examples also include the EU, NAFTA, GATT, NATO, UN and WTO. Affairs of each member state are collectively represented and implemented on a global level between and amongst national government with a defacto lack of input from citizenry.

<sup>129</sup>For example, Julius Nyerere's Tanzania was economically starved during the 1980s for refusing to enter into loan agreements with the IFIs. Also, during the 2002 food crisis in Malawi, the country's access to aid was temporarily halted after it too questioned the IMF's agricultural policy. France also directly intervened in 2011 to remove President Laurent Gbagbo from power (Howden, 2011).

tenuous relationships between individual SSA nation states and its citizens. Thus, SSA countries face a crisis of legitimacy given that they “no longer perform traditional roles, but rather merely act as a node within a super-national network” (Castellas, p. 61), marking a retreat from their obligations and ceding of authority to European entities that have no interest in furthering the needs of their people. Hardt & Negri (2001) describe this new reconceptualization of the westphalian notion of states within neoliberal globalization as “Empire” to indicate a “decentered and deterritorialization apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontier” (p.xii).

Nevertheless, SSA compulsory integration into Eurocentrism has resulted in the region’s unsuccessful adoption of the principles of neoliberalism for the past fifty years within its political and socio-economic spheres. This is because the Eurocentric focus of free marketism guarantees an equally unsuccessful outcome for the region. For instance, the shortage of local investment capital gives MNCs and TNCs (not indigenous Africans) optimum advantage when SSA nations must privatize their industries and services, whilst liberalization consequently allows these foreign entities to dictate terms and conditions of trade to their host governments. As such, their size, complex structure, and multiplicity of interests allow these MNCs and TNCs to act as economic predators in the region and “dominate means of production in Africa, sustain transfers of income for their own benefits and at their own discretion” (Udofia, 1984, p. 355). Thus, the neoliberal mantra of ‘freedom’ as applied within SSA denotes resource transfer or flight without interference from SSA governments bound for the imperial financial centers, which

ultimately control the flow of capital, in the form of debt repayments, odious debts, profits and illicit financial flows. Likewise, measures implemented to address poverty and underdevelopment are all Eurocentric in nature. For example, conceptualization and measurements of poverty have resulted in significant knowledge problems that render poverty alleviation incompatible to the realities of the SSA context. At this juncture, it is worthy to note that imperial nations during their various paths to development and post-development do not adhere to these same frameworks that SSA has been catapulted into. As mentioned above, the realities of statehood in Europe evolved during several centuries of political and socio-economic contradictions and negotiations. Further still, imperial powers continue to adopt protectionists measures to protect ‘our way of life’ (Kundnani, 2012), or their interests even as they champion the invincibility of free marketism in SSA<sup>130</sup>.

On the other hand, SSA governments are incapable of challenging the status quo. They are nevertheless, engaged in active competition to protect free trade (often in flagrant violations of their own national laws), to guarantee cheap submissive labour and to employ the state apparatus to contain the population should they rise up against the

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<sup>130</sup>The *African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)* of 2000 signed into law by President Clinton aims to foster partnership and development by expanding U.S. trade and investment with SSA. However, countries have to adhere to stringent conditions, which are subsequently reevaluated yearly on a country by country basis. These conditions reflect neoliberal principles and specifically eliminate barriers to United States trade and investment. Scholars have classified AGOA as a coercive free trade agreement. Similarly, the EU through its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) provides subsidies to its farmers whilst SSA farmers are denied this privilege due to the policies of free trade. Both the AGOA and the removal of farming subsidies destabilize SSA as indigenous industries are forced to compete unsuccessfully with larger and more efficient subsidized entities.

ensuring social and environmental depredations. Local containment of unrest is usually carried out with military aid, cooperation and overt or covert support from the home countries of the MNCs and TNCs (wa Thiongo (2004). These gaping uneven benefits of the free market prompts Falk (1999) to refer to it as “Predatory Globalization” whilst Bauman, (1998) describes it as “polarizing” aspects of globalization or Harvey (2005) as “creative destruction.”

The question then becomes – how can foreign entities and nations wield such power control and influence in another land, and also widely suppress amongst these indigenes the desire for self-determination where the natives outnumber them? The answer is the subtle socio-cultural construction and reproduction of reality as defined in the language of critical theory or cultural hegemony as explained by Gramsci from a post-colonial theory perspective. Indeed, Gramsci’s argument that the manufacture of consent ensured through the two overlapping spheres of the civil and political societies is apparent in the manners in which the imperial project continues to endure in SSA.

As I argue in this dissertation, the European civilizing mission or *‘la mission civilisatrice’* remains the justification platform that serves to rationalize the essence, need and prolongation of the structures of the imperial project<sup>131</sup>. I also further identify the economic, political and socio-cultural mechanisms<sup>132</sup> of the imperial project as the

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<sup>131</sup>The Structures of the Imperial Project are colonialism, decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization.

<sup>132</sup>Institutions – IMF, World Bank, WTO & the ICC; Military Presence and/or Interventions & Defense Agreements & Strongman Leadership/Presidents for Life.



intersecting civil and political realms that serve to ensure European continued dominance over African societies. These civic and public institutional apparatus, as well as practices within these imperial mechanisms are often presented as necessary for the greater good of SSA and are ultimately couched within language as mandatory for the advancement, development, stability and social order needs of the region. Such tools of hegemony are, as explained by Gramsci, implemented in a double pronged approach to manufacture consent; that is the political, economic and socio-cultural mechanisms of the civilizing mission invariably adopt forms of non-coercive hegemony (soft power) and coercive (hard power) tactics. The manufacture of consent is not only necessary for control of the SSA populations. Imperial powers also have to convince their various citizens of the necessity and merits of the imperial project to justify their continued presence in SSA territories and affairs.

Initial imperial encounters with Africans were characterized with mutual trade and exchanges of technology and goods. However, as the partition of the Berlin Conference began to physically manifest itself within SSA, imperial powers then embarked on a new phase of consolidation of power and control on their new acquired and or conquered territories. As part of their strategy of utilizing soft power, the policy of divide and rule was implemented as an effective hegemonic tool. In order to sow discord amongst Africans (Kant, 2010), the prevailing political and socio-cultural referents were realigned to cultivate elite cultures sympathetic and subservient to imperial logic<sup>133</sup>. On

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<sup>133</sup>Inherent in these frameworks are the types of systems and subjects imperial nations envisaged to be of most benefit to their goals. Under the hegemonic and governance ideologies of assimilation and direct rule (as practiced by the Portuguese and French) or association and

the other hand, *Orientalism*'s systematic 'body of theory and practice' as explained by Said serves to assuage concern and thereby acquiescence from the court of European public opinion. Gramsci refers to these infrastructural and organizational arms as civil society, or according to Althusser (1971) Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), whilst Mills (in Giroux, 2011) names them cultural apparatus<sup>134</sup>. All these tools of soft power hegemony have succeeded in projecting an air of normalcy, indispensability and superiority of imperial structures within the psyche of the African people and also inducing the inevitability of the 'manifest destiny' on the part of the Europeans rendering possibilities of resistance minimal to the ravages of the imperial project.

The potency of hegemony is evidenced by a cultural assimilated African elite class referred to as "*evolues*" or "Black Frenchmen" in the French and Belgian colonies, "Assimilados" in Portuguese colonies and "African Europeans" or "Been-Tos" in British Africa now epitomized by the dynamics represented by Spivak's post-colonial individuals or Fanon's *comprador class* as they attempt to stride between the imperial culture and the tenuous relationships with the subalterns - their fellow compatriots. Explained through Collins, (2000) concept of the matrix of domination, African elites are classified as the subaltern class in interactions within the confines of the civilizing

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indirect rule (as implemented by the British and Belgians) or apartheid (South Africa), Europeans established systems of active acculturation of some Africans (as an elite class) into the European way of life.

<sup>134</sup>These arms include the political (Institutions – IMF, World Bank, WTO & the ICC), economic (Foreign Aid, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) & Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and socio-cultural (missionaries – Churches and the education system) mechanisms of the imperial project.

mission, but are elites in their own African societies. These elites well versed in imperial culture were able to challenge the system from within to gain concessions as well as mobilized and exploited the energy of subalterns to articulate for formal imperial disengagement from their respective nations. The *comprador class* inherited a post-colonial well-structured state apparatus reminiscent of imperial powers (Christopher, 1988), which is used to consolidate power over the subalterns, but still remain subservient to the imperial status quo. African elites in the words of Freire (2005), have a low consciousness of themselves as persons, because to be free is to mirror the behaviors of their oppressor, hence the impasse between the post-colonials and subalterns. However, at the dawn of democratization<sup>135</sup>, the masses are still being energized in electoral campaigns to gain votes, but policies to address their concerns remain unfulfilled. Hegemony from below, per Gramsci, thus hinders the designing and developing of systems and institutions that are organic to SSA. Consequently, even though the imperial models are ineffective in the context of the lives and aspirations of the majority of SSA population, the tendency remains for policy framers from amongst the post-colonial individuals to revert to imperial positions. This mindset explains for example the failures and limited scope of actions of the NAM; The ADB; The AU; NEPAD the ECOWAS and indeed foretells the future of any such cooperative agendas in SSA.

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<sup>135</sup>Again, European styled 'democratic institutions' implemented wholesale within the African context. Even though SSA structures because of for example tribal and linguist differences are unable to cope with this paradigm.

For citizens from imperial nations, non-coercive hegemony dictates that significant quantity of knowledge on SSA is still oriented towards the civilizing mission. As such, the civilizing mission as a Manifest Destiny is still reminiscent of Said's "The East is a career." Just as young Englishmen were able to freely traverse and engage in various activities as part of the civilizing mission during colonization, young citizens are still encouraged to go make a difference in the lives of poor Africans now guised as NGO's, Mission or Mercy Trips, aid organizers, expatriates, consultants with the IFIs or other international organizations.

For those Africans or Memmi's "colonizer who refuses" to succumb to the status quo, benign surveillance is quickly transformed to coercive (hard power) tactics meted out by the political state apparatus. For example, during colonization, imperial armies were relied upon by missionaries, traders and occupiers to militarily engage with recalcitrant communities. Likewise, resisters outside the acceptable frameworks routinely face varied degrees of harassment and punishment by local or international authorities<sup>136</sup>. Furthermore, African leadership jockey for position and acknowledgment within the imperial project. Within this context of hierarchal leadership, those nations or leadership worthy of elite recognition are those whose leaders who conform to the dictates of the imperial project. Such juxtapositions for imperial recognition pit both politicians vying to retain or to be elected in national politics as well individual SSA nations at odds with each other as they attempt to avoid relegation to pariah status and all the accompanying

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<sup>136</sup>These may include collective punishment such as war, sanction and individual targeting such as character assassination, academic disenfranchisement, torture, imprisonment or even being killed, preventing or hindering opposition to the affairs on hand.

negative connotations associated. Therefore, African elites are not only unable to function constructively for the benefit of their compatriots but are also incapable of analyzing the relationships between imperial powers, their roles as leaders of their various nations and to the SSA region as a whole.

As discussed by Miyoshi (1993), SSA's absorption into the 'chronopolitics' of the imperial project cannot reclaim its pre-colonial autonomy and seclusion but must contend within the global imperial context. Nevertheless, according to Memmi, Césaire, Fanon, Dubois, wa Thiong'o and Nandy as I discussed above, the projection of and enculturation into Eurocentrism has severe psychological implications on both colonialists and Africans. The institutionalization of European superiority is the reality that shapes the African psyche. These dynamics manifest in our overarching assigned position of inferiority in the African's relationship to the imperial project, how we relate to each other in our superior evolution into post-colonial individuals/ *comprador class* and the negative designation attached to the subaltern African. The "complete disorder...disconnecting them from their histories, their landscapes, languages, social relations, their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with their world" (Smith, 2012, p. 29) necessitates the African's navigation of split and uneasy selves, double consciousness or psychosis. I argue that it is this deeply embedded subconscious feeling of inferiority complex that is a significant hindrance to addressing poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.

Mental colonization or as described by Smith (2012) this reach of reach of imperialism into 'our head,' as I explained, is foundational to the hierarchical structures

instituted in post-colonial SSA. That is, rather than engage in meaningful nation building that reflected aspects of pre-colonial qualities as advocated by Fanon and other African critical theorists, hegemonic conditioning has resulted in fractured and fragmented SSA nations led by the elites. These elites who reside amongst but rarely with one's fellow countrymen are testaments of the incapacity to enfranchise with fellow compatriots. As Fanon had predicted, amid the region's ongoing predicament of self-destruction<sup>137</sup>, are the actualities of complex failures to harness the potential of fellow citizens by the post-colonial *comprador class* who have abdicated their roles to others in humanity in their complicity and indifference to the suffering of the masses within SSA.

**In response to the Imperial Project – limitations and possibilities.** Similar to critical theory, the theoretical and practical applications of post-colonial theory are embroiled in ongoing debate and critique (Dirlik, 1994; Williams, 1997; Chibber, 2013). Abrahamsen (2003) summarizes these criticisms and challenges of post-colonial theory's relevance to address the imperial project in SSA into two categories.

The first challenge is the perception that post-colonial theory is deeply rooted in academic and esoteric language and thus inherently incapable of addressing or articulating the “developmental imperative” of contemporary SSA socioeconomic and political realities. Particularly, as the promise of meaningful independence has yet to materialize. Instead the region is embroiled in the realities of “neo-colonialism, imperialism, and continued subservience in the international system as expressed, for

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<sup>137</sup>As evidenced by disastrous corruption in the form of corrupted officials and even civil wars and violence.

example, in the debt crisis and the erosion of sovereignty implied by the imposition of structural adjustment programmes” (Abrahamsen, 2003, p. 192). As post-colonial theory is grounded in theory, it lacks not only the radical energy, but also the political urgency and ideology of previous generations of post-colonial theorists to address the pressing challenges of the region. As such, argue its critics, it hinders an authentic engagement with power structures that upholds imperialism. In other words, its inherent political passivity “provides an alibi for inequality, exploitation, and oppression in their modern guises under capitalist relationships” (Dirlik 1994, p. 347) resulting in the theory’s marginalization in addressing ongoing poverty and underdevelopment crisis in that part of the world.

A second critique that surrounds post-colonial theory is that it manifests elements of Eurocentrism in several ways. Ahmad (1995) argues that post-colonial theory upholds the civilizing mission as it privileges the narratives of imperialism by presenting an ahistorical picture of the colonized before the advent of the colonial counter, given its particular focus on deconstruction of the colonizer/colonized interactions. Furthermore, Chabal (1996) points out that post-colonial theorists borrow from post-modernism to establish a theoretical platform, which is an example of its Eurocentric focus. Whilst elements of post-modernist scholarship might be relevant to issues within SSA, it is however, according to Chabal, unsuited for the urgent needs of SSA. This is because post-colonial theorists are third world intellectuals with a quest to negotiate their functions within western academia, whilst the west desires to better understand its colonial past. As such post-colonial theory is not intended to analyze the actualities of

individuals who reside physically in post-colonial societies. This attitude is evident in the passive and conservative posturing of post-colonial theorists in confronting power structures that determine the dire situations in these post-colonial societies like SSA.

Nevertheless, post-colonial theory remains a valid starting point to deconstruct imperial legacies given the inability of European theories to deal specifically and effectively with the colonized world (Ashcroft et al, 2007). Also, I approach post-colonial theory in this dissertation as a unified body of theory that includes the theorizing of earlier and current thinkers on post-colonial issues, which allows for a more fluid scope of analysis. Finally, the respective focus of Francophone scholars on the subjective aspects of imperialism, whilst the Anglophones highlights the objective, provides a balance to the enquiry of post-colonial societies. After all, it is the hegemonic imposition of the superiority of the imperial culture that continues the psychological control on the colonized, which post-colonial theory attempts to provincialize

According to Freire (1993), it is our ontological responsibility to challenge and transform oppression. As such, “that specifically human act of intervening” (p. 98) in the world around us is the beginning point of the development of a liberatory praxis of which education plays a fundamental role.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

In the following paragraphs, I examine the history, tenets as applicable to my topic, and then proceed to a critical analysis of the Imperial Project, poverty and underdevelopment. I conclude with examining the limitations and possibilities of critical pedagogy to address the predicament of SSA.



**History.** The critical approach or the process of critique in understanding or explaining the dynamics inherent in the larger society is as I explain above, fundamental to the Frankfurt School of thought. An educational agenda must therefore not be limited only to knowledge acquisition, but also the skills and abilities to decipher as well as maneuver within the value-laden curriculum of everyday life (Apple, 2004). Paulo Freire in his relationship with poor and disenfranchised peasants in Brazil encountered this reality. Freire's (1993) publication *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* aligned the principles of critical theory to education. Although Freire is acknowledged as the inaugural philosopher to implement critical theory within the realm of education in his work (McLaren, 1999), it was Henry Giroux who coined the term Critical Pedagogy in 1983 to take account of this merging of the fundamentals of critical theory to education. In addition to Freire and Giroux other educational theorists such as Apple (2004), McLaren (1999), hooks (2003), Shor (1992) and Kellner (2003) continue to articulate on critical pedagogy. Thus, critical theory applied to the realm of education is critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy therefore aims to deconstruct the dominant and oppressive theories and beliefs of society within an education framework leading ultimately to its transformation.

**Tenets and application to SSA.** In the following paragraphs, I examine the relevant tenets of critical pedagogy as applicable to my topic.

***The ongoing process of democratization.*** As such, as an emancipatory pedagogy upholding the ongoing process of democratization (Giroux, 2011) is a major tenet of critical pedagogy. In direct response to the socioeconomic, political and cultural changes of his time, Dewey's seminal theorizing on Democracy and Education in 1916

summarized the philosophical and pedagogical ideas between the possibilities of education to sustain the democratic process. Dewey explains that democracy extend beyond the right to vote. It is “more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (Dewey 1916, p. 93). A strong democracy not only promotes active citizens’ participation based on equal and consensual terms for all in social and political life, but also the social norms and structures of society must also be critically interrogated and allowed to pragmatically evolve according to the needs of the society.

Such social systems require informed and knowledgeable citizens capable of intelligent participation in the democratic process (Kellner, 2003). Education thus plays the strategic role in establishing a “democratic community” which Dewey describes as “a form of social life” characterized by the mutuality of interests among its members (Dewey, 1916, p. 92). Such a community however, is not a harmonious entity as it has to balance the interests of individuals and groups within it leading to inclusion and exclusion of some members from this communal life. Therefore, a vigorous and robust education system should produce informed and educated citizens engaged in collective civic engagement, capable to understand, interrogate and articulate upon the social dynamics of their society to enact social change.

Scholars of critical pedagogy continue to be influenced by Dewey’s intimate connection between democracy and education. As such, critical pedagogy is based on the foundational understanding that educational activity cannot be neutral; it is naturally an ethical and political process (Freire, 1985 & McLaren 1999). That is, education has to

involve more than teaching people to read, write and be well versed in abstract knowledge and information. Critical pedagogues believe education must be a vehicle to develop the capacity for critical thinking in order to help people decode and understand the social world and circumstances of our lived experiences. Freire for example theorized on the concept of '*conscientização*' which closely translates as critical consciousness or critical awareness. Critical consciousness is the ability to perceive oppression within social, political, and economic realms and to encourage others to take action against oppressive systems (Freire, 1998). Such an education, according to Giroux (2011), is the cornerstone of nation building as it facilitates the process of deliberative democracy. It grooms the political agency amongst its citizens to enable them to not only challenge dominant pedagogies, for example the role of culture but also to make them "capable of governing and being governed" (p. 144).

***Role of culture.*** Critical Theorists such as Habermas and Foucault discussed the complex relationship between power and knowledge. They both understood knowledge as a vital social resource that rivaled tangible material possessions such as land and money. Therefore, knowledge is an inherent component of power relations and the mechanisms of power guarantee the production of various types of 'knowledge'. Nevertheless, what constitutes 'true knowledge' or reality is determined and controlled within the parameters of the dominant structure in order to prolong its power base. Both Giroux (2011) and Gramsci articulate that the power of the ruling class is not enforced only through the security forces. Rather, power is reified through a form of ideological hegemony via a system of manufactured societal consent mediated within the realm of

culture. Culture in turn according to (Foley et al, 2015) incorporates “social and institutional practices, cultural and social significations, cultural and educational capital, language, and forms of knowledge” (p. 118).

Horkheimer and Adorno (1997) in their critique of the relentless march of capitalism, introduced the term “Culture industry’ to signify the commodification and standardization of cultural institutions such as education, mass media, art, the family and religion. As such these spheres are colonized and subsequently transformed into a crucial medium of ideological domination to control the flow of information and the conscious thought of the masses to directly serve the capitalist agenda. The manipulations of culture in this manner discourage individuality and critical thinking. Therefore within critical pedagogy, culture is seen as a site of contestation and at the same time, as possibilities of intervention.

As a site of contestation, critical pedagogues, argue that even at the best effort, a benevolent educational institution functions predominantly as a transmitter of social and cultural reproduction. For example, Bowles and Gintis (1976), explain the reproduction of social relations of production through their correspondence theory. They argue that schools function primarily to produce the manpower to sustain the economy according to the supposed abilities of students. Also, the hierarchical structures within the learning environment echo the existing social order in terms of values and norms prevalent in a society and thus students are groomed to reproduce the prevailing status quo. Likewise, Bourdieu’s (1973) cultural capital theory explains that individuals bring to a learning environment their cultural capital. That is the accumulation of knowledge, behaviors and

skills gained through familial and other societal interactions. However, the culture that education institutions transmit rewards and privilege to its learners mirrors that of the dominant culture. Thus the cultural capital students bring with them are devalued causing them to be disadvantaged. As such the function of education is selection and socialization which reproduces inequalities, marginalization (Young, 1990), oppression (Johnson, 2006), and prejudice and stereotypes (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012). However, the bidirectional relationship cultivated between teachers and students serves as a platform for intervention for both parties.

*Teachers and students as transformative intellectuals.* Critical pedagogy understands that teachers and students live within the framework of social, political and cultural relationships. Nevertheless, within the current neoliberal pedagogy teachers are viewed as specialized technicians within the overall school bureaucracy whose only function is to impart knowledge<sup>138</sup> within an acultural, apolitical and ahistorical context. Critical pedagogues Aronowitz and Giroux (1987), theorizing on this phenomenon, imagined an alternative reality with the possibility of viewing teachers and students as transformative intellectuals. That is to say, rather than from a mechanistic perspective, teachers and students must be seen as capable of engaging in intellectual exchanges during the education process. Furthermore, such exchanges produce teachers as reflexive scholars and practitioners and students as reflexive learners and citizens. Together, they are able to not only problematize the sites of cultural reproduction within the education establishment, but are also able to sustain critical discourse on how these are manifested

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<sup>138</sup>To an equally apathetic student population.

and sustained within society. In other words, an engagement emphasizing the ways in which “teachers and students sustain, resist, or accommodate languages, ideologies, social processes, and myths that position them within existing relations of power and dependency” (Giroux, 1985, p. 35). As such, in practice, teachers and students as transformative intellectuals are constantly engaged in efforts to understand the assumptions, values and beliefs embedded within the pedagogical experiences.

In the context of critical pedagogy teachers exist in a dialectic relationship with their students, within which knowledge and meanings are constantly negotiated and debated upon. Again Freire (1993) articulated and distinguished between this form of learning and teaching as a problem posing education as opposed to the traditional banking education. In the traditional mode of education, teachers are assumed as the only pillars and objective transmitters of knowledge whilst students are passive receivers of the teacher’s narrative. In critiquing this mechanistic mode of education, Freire argues that this approach to pedagogy is authoritarian and serves to uphold systems of domination and oppression within the wider societal framework. This is so because the teacher’s narratives are not reflective of the lived realities of the student. Furthermore, it discourages questioning and as such simulates a fixed reality for citizens with no hope of mobilizing for social change. On the other hand, however, transformative intellectuals engaged in problem posing education develop forms of knowledge and pedagogical practices consistent with ‘*conscientização*’. In such learning spaces, cultural capital of students is affirmed and essential to cultivate and establish a culture of political agency that can critically intervene to enact change.

*Language of hope and possibility.* Nevertheless, critical education theorists acknowledge the challenges, hardships and obstacles inherent in confronting entrenched oppressive systems and introduced the language of hope and possibilities as an integral part of critical pedagogy. This is to say that hope is an ontological need as one cannot be fatalistic about the conditions of one's condition and still exercise agency and intervene to improve these realities. Without intervention, hopelessness itself becomes a distortion of possibilities. However, Freire (1994) furthers that "alone hope does not win...we need critical hope the way fish needs unpolluted water" (p.8). Freire's metaphor remind us that although hope is essential to move us beyond critique and cynicism to seek liberation, critical hope dictates that our actions must be cautious and deliberate to ensure meaningful results. In other words "to continue our work for justice even as the forces of injustice may gain greater power for a time" (hooks, 2003, p. xiv), one must be cognizant of the limitations of the historical, political and social structures that are in place within one's specific context, but nevertheless believe and continue to struggle with the innate understanding that 'there is a way out,' even from the most dangerous and desperate situations" (xv).

**Critical analysis - the Imperial Project, poverty, and underdevelopment.** In this dissertation, I am arguing that the institution of education is a socio-cultural mechanism which fundamentally aims to provide both platform and resources that will nurture and preserve individuals into functioning members of society. Both pre-colonial

and imperial education systems in SSA<sup>139</sup> used varied sociocultural factors<sup>140</sup> to ensure their desired results. At the same time however, both pre-colonial and imperial education invariably use these mechanisms albeit for quite distinct reasons and functions.

In pre-colonial SSA, education was to prepare individuals by transferring skills in order to ensure adaptation and survival in the physical environment of the community. Therefore, pre-colonial pedagogy grounded in the socio-cultural, economic, political and physical environment of the community produces a complete individual intimately and symbiotically integrated in the community milieu. Imperial education on the other hand, continues to thrive on the predominant needs of the imperial project. Therefore, the corresponding system of education is firstly based on the assumptions of the *civilizing mission* or '*la mission civilisatrice*' and the necessity to cultivate pliant and cooperative Africans to allow the imperial project to flourish unhindered. Consequently, imperial education is not a reflection the social realities of the African people.

Particularly, when analyzed within the tenets of critical pedagogy as I have laid out above; pre-colonial education despite its strengths has certain inherent limitations. Regardless, pre-colonial education does not currently impinge directly on the current poverty and underdevelopment predicament of SSA given the interruption that ushered in the age of formal imperialism and in turn imperial education with its specific intent and particular Eurocentric focus. Hence, I maintain that a critical analysis of the relationship

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<sup>139</sup>That is colonial and neoliberal globalization education paradigms. Colonial education as the precursor laid the foundations now being perfected by neoliberal education.

<sup>140</sup>These are those set of traditions, customs, habits belief and value systems that characterize a population.



between imperial education, poverty and underdevelopment premises on the notion that education is an effective tool to foster hegemonic conditions. Hegemony as a tool is used effectively as a socio-cultural mechanism of the imperial project to create for example the dialectic of post-colonial individuals/*comprador class*, the African subaltern and the realities that accompanies these mindsets such as oppression, marginalization, exploitation and cultural reproduction. This education process is therefore not based on supporting the development and sustenance of democratic or social justice principles as it does not encourage understanding of and meaningful critique of the factors that bears so heavily on the realities of African disparity.

For example, the hegemonic imposition of the process of democratization on SSA political systems does not reflect Deweyan principles or Wiredu's consensual democracy. On the other hand, the goal of imperial education is evidently unlikely to establish spaces for democratic cultures to flourish. Democracy as practiced in SSA is an inorganic process rooted in Eurocentrism. This failure of the education system to cultivate a democratic community is evident in the general understanding and attitude towards not only voting but abilities to interrogate leaders as part of the electoral process. In other words, Africans are not well educated in civic contents to neither negotiate nor understand the essence, possibilities and duties integral to the culture of a functioning democratic process as currently configured. As a result, leaders are elected not on their merits, position or agendas on issues and track record but on the basis of ethnic, religious,

cultural or linguistic affiliation<sup>141</sup>. Furthermore, Zakaria's (2008) concept of illiberal democracy<sup>142</sup> can be understood under this lack of knowledge and participation within the democratic process. From this premise, imperial education in SSA does not promote a mindset of intelligent participation. Consequently, the positive expectations of democracy remains an illusory concept in SSA, which offers no benefit or hopes that citizens can challenge, seek or attain redress of the status quo.

Another example of the failure of imperial education system to create a democratic community is the subtle and apparent prevalence of Eurocentric cultural hegemony in various manners within education systems in SSA. This permeation continues to maintain the power structures of the imperial project and (re)produces the various inequalities such as race, class and economic ideologies attached to it. Eurocentrism as pedagogy is inherent in the adapted, academic and evangelical pacifist curriculum<sup>143</sup> of colonial education and the neoliberal pedagogy. The methods of colonial education were successful in conditioning the African mindset to accept the value systems of this phase of the imperial project and are continuously replicated in African

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<sup>141</sup>In Sierra Leone for example it is rare that peoples of the Temne or Limba tribes will vote for a Mende candidate. The same is true of the Kikuyu and Luo tribes in Kenya; the 2017 Presidential election was marred by tribal violence, chaos and discord.

<sup>142</sup>As I explained in Chapter 4, illiberal democracy can be described as perfunctory implementation of democracy where the rule of law is routinely and flagrantly abused by leaders.

<sup>143</sup>As I explained in Chapter 3, the adapted curriculum was intended for the masses or the subalterns. The academic curriculum was geared to the formation of the African elites or the post-colonial individuals/comprador elites and constituted of a more advanced education. The evangelical comprised of the spiritual component of the education system to further ensure African passivity to imperialism.

societies. Indeed, what constitutes true knowledge and reality are all defined and controlled through Eurocentric cultural paradigms. For instance, like Dewey, African nationalist independence leaders recognized that education within the SSA context should primarily be concerned with sustainable national development and must reflect African consciousness. As such, various attempted reforms<sup>144</sup> have been initiated. However, because Eurocentrism is still dominant in African culture, “knowledge hegemony” (Etieyibo, 2016) is deeply seated in the assumption that Eurocentric knowledge is superior to indigenous African knowledge and all the curricular reforms still reflect imperial education constructs, thereby resulting in an abstract and intangible relevance to the daily lives of African people. Eurocentrism is of course a predominantly one-way venture which does not allow the cultural diversity inherent within SSA to compete in this restrictive global sphere. Such lack of access not only guarantees SSA’s complete subjugation to the dictates of the imperial agenda, but also at the same time paralyzes and hinders African ability to take control and enact meaningful changes to align with social realities. It is this cultural bondage as direct consequences of the detachment of the African to their traditional cultural referents in favour of the imperial indoctrination that wa Thiongo (1981) describes as “the cultural bomb”.

The effects of European cultural hegemony and its ongoing failure to establish a viable democratic culture also seep into the modes and methods of knowledge transfer in SSA education systems further weakening the quality of a pertinent education to its

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<sup>144</sup>These include attempts at an ‘*Africanized curriculum*’ and South Africa’s attempted curricular reform in 2005.

citizens. As I stated previously, the goal of imperial education remains to acculturate Africans subservient to the whims of the imperial project. Thus, the modes and methods have always been to ensure that teachers transfer pieces of knowledge that students will subsequently learn and memorize its core contents and manual skills. This sort of learning process Freire refers to as the banking method or the mechanistic acquisition of knowledge. Africans themselves under imperial control understood its power structures and the personal benefits associated with imperial education. They consequently came to identify and value education as a source of individual material betterment and therefore are not wholly concerned with other aspects or potential of learning (Ball, 1983).

On the other hand, however, an education that embodies '*conscientização*' encourages the cultivation of democratic principles and thereby the space to expand the horizon of the functions, role and possibilities of education. Current education in SSA is not geared to train critical thinkers but to respond to the demands of the neoliberal globalization economy which is to prepare Africans as workers (Giroux, 2011). Within the framework of '*conscientização*', the possibilities of establishing a democratic culture which supports critical perspectives are significant and powerful within the SSA context. An African education established on the foundations of cultivating critical thinking, problem-posing, problem-solving and liberation will be a vehicle that makes apparent the structures and mechanisms of the imperial project that induce oppression, marginalization and exploitation. With critical pedagogy, Africans could finally employ education to decode and understand the social, political, and economic circumstances of our lived experiences.

**In response to the Imperial Project - limitations and possibilities.** As I mentioned previously critical pedagogy was first conceptualized and implemented by Freire, but was subsequently adopted and continues to be modified by scholars in the western world<sup>145</sup>. These varied articulations and approaches amongst scholars have resulted in a lack of a definite conception (Brueing, 2011). In turn, the many critiques of critical pedagogy's assumptions and principles persist in the midst of these inherent complexities. According to Kanpol (2009), these critiques can be understood within the boundaries of a) The right of critical pedagogues to speak for the oppressed; b) the opaque language used by critical pedagogues; and c) a lack of practical tools for implementing social change. Whilst these are valid concerns, and pose significant challenges for implementing a critical pedagogical approach to undo the African mindset that imperial education has cultivated, I take guidance from Freire's articulations on his initial visions for critical pedagogy. Integral to Freire's educational philosophy is the understanding that because pedagogical choices are grounded in one's ideology, it therefore makes sense to speak of critical pedagogies rather than of a pedagogy given the variances inherent in the concept of ideology. My interpretation is evidenced by the flexibility of critical pedagogy that has allowed constant modification and adaptations by other critical educational theorists. As such, like critical theory, the strength of critical pedagogy lies in its fluidity in practice. Freire was adamant in articulating that critical pedagogy cannot be reduced to a fixed and prescribed set of strategies applicable on demand. Instead it remains defined "by its content and must be approached as a project of

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<sup>145</sup>For example, hooks's (1994) 'transformative pedagogy.'

individual and social transformation – that it could never be a mere method... or viewed as an a priori discourse to be asserted or a methodology to be implemented, or for that matter a slavish attachment to forms of knowledge” (Giroux, 2011, p. 162).

Whilst I acknowledge the diversity inherent in critical pedagogy, I am also aware that Freire’s philosophy of education “is intimately connected with his experiences as a man of the Third World” (Roberts 2015, p. 378). Therefore, in my attempts to use education to deconstruct and transform the underlying economic structures that produce relations of exploitation in SSA nations, Freire’s successful interactions with impoverished urban poor and rural peasant communities not only in Brazil, but in other parts of the world<sup>146</sup> makes his educational philosophy most relevant to the SSA education context.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I applied critical lens to the topic of this dissertation. I firstly presented the dominant but uncritical perspective of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA, and then proceeded to present a reframing through critical perspectives by using critical theory, post-colonial theory and critical pedagogy. As part of this reframing, I presented a brief history, tenets, how these theories can be used to critique poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. In this section, I examined not only the structures and mechanism of the imperial project, but also the varied manners in which Africans themselves have interacted with them so as to sustain or resist these oppressive policies

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<sup>146</sup>Whilst in exile, Freire was engaged with communities in for example Chile and Guinea-Bissau in SSA.

and practices. Finally, I concluded each section with an analysis of the limitations and possibilities of the topic.

My goal in the final chapter – chapter six, is to present a vision of education that can contribute to addressing the structural foundations of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA as I have articulated upon during the course of this dissertation. It is my hope that these recommendations will be invaluable resources that Africans, as well as others united in humanity can employ to promote avenues to address the many ills that plague the region.

## CHAPTER VI

### VISION FOR THE FUTURE AND CONCLUSION

#### **Introduction**

Poverty and underdevelopment are shared experiences in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) that have spanned the colonial era and continue to plague post-colonial states. In an area rich in natural resources, human capacity and potential, SSA's economic stagnation and subsequent marginalization is a contradictory reality (Tsegaye, 2016). I have maintained throughout this dissertation that SSA is experiencing the lingering and residual effects of imperialism, which I name as the uninterrupted imperial project or the imperial project. The imperial project indicates that access to raw materials and other resources continues to characterize the relationship between imperialism and SSA. I also use this term to signify the continued and prolonged realities of imperialism. In other words, an informal imperial relationship endures even though SSA nations gained independence from formal imperialism. These hegemonic relationships are maintained through neocolonial structures (comprised of decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization) and corresponding mechanisms, which I identify as political, economic and socio-cultural. I also argue that education has been used by imperial structures as a socio-cultural mechanism to cultivate a kind of citizenry in SSA that perpetuates the imperial status quo. As such, Sub Saharan Africans (Africans) immersed in the mindset of the imperial project are not skilled at interrogating the nuances of the imperial project or engaging in widespread, meaningful and coordinated



critical activities to alleviate their condition, thus compounding the fate of many Africans. Therefore, in this study, I explore how critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory may be employed to analyze the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment that plague SSA, and also offer possibilities of a vision of education to address these realities.

In the preceding chapters of this dissertation, I have examined, discussed, analyzed and critically interrogated the historical and contemporary factors I maintain uphold this cycle of poverty and underdevelopment within SSA. In the introductory chapter one, I laid the foundational elements for the study. Chapter two was my examination of the political and economic structures as well as the mechanisms which ensure the imperial project, whilst chapter three presented my discussions on the evolution of education as a socio-cultural mechanism of pre-colonial SSA and imperialism. In chapter four, I established the continued legacies of the imperial project by synthesizing relevant points from both chapters two and three. I analyze in chapter five the imperial project from critical perspectives and concluded by evaluating the varied manners and ways succeeding Africans themselves have interacted with this concept that continue to exert such an indomitable presence in their reality. Finally, critical epistemologies dictate the reconstruction of phenomenon after deconstruction. Given the information I have presented so far in this dissertation, I attempt to put forth a critical vision of education within the parameters of Agenda 2063 to address the structural foundations that give rise to poverty and underdevelopment within SSA in this chapter - chapter six.

I begin by giving a brief review of Agenda 2063 and its accompanying educational aims. Then I will proceed with an education paradigm based on tenets of critical pedagogy which aligns to Agenda 2063, followed by the limitations of this normative vision given the seeming encompassing nature of the imperial project. I will conclude the chapter with my suggestions for future research and my reflections on the discussions I have presented in this dissertation.

### **Background to Agenda 2063**

Agenda 2063 was adopted by members of the African Union (AU) in May 2013 as an effort to rethink the future and chart a new direction for SSA. The agenda is a well-developed ambitious but comprehensive plan for the structural transformation of Africa within the next 50 years. African leaders stated their seven-point aspirations and pledged to advance on eight priority areas on a continental wide agenda which are to be integrated into regional and national development plans (Addaney, 2018). These aspirations and priorities are represented in Figure Five below. Presented as a Pan-African people-centered vision and action plan, Agenda 2063 calls for action by all segments of society to work together and build a prosperous and united Africa based on shared values and a common destiny to secure unity, prosperity, and peace – for all its citizens. Specifically, within the scope of this dissertation, the plan aims to reduce extreme poverty in SSA nations to below 10% by 2045, and 3% by 2063 and a collective GDP in proportion to its place in world's population and natural resource endowments (Turner, Cilliers & Hughes, 2014).

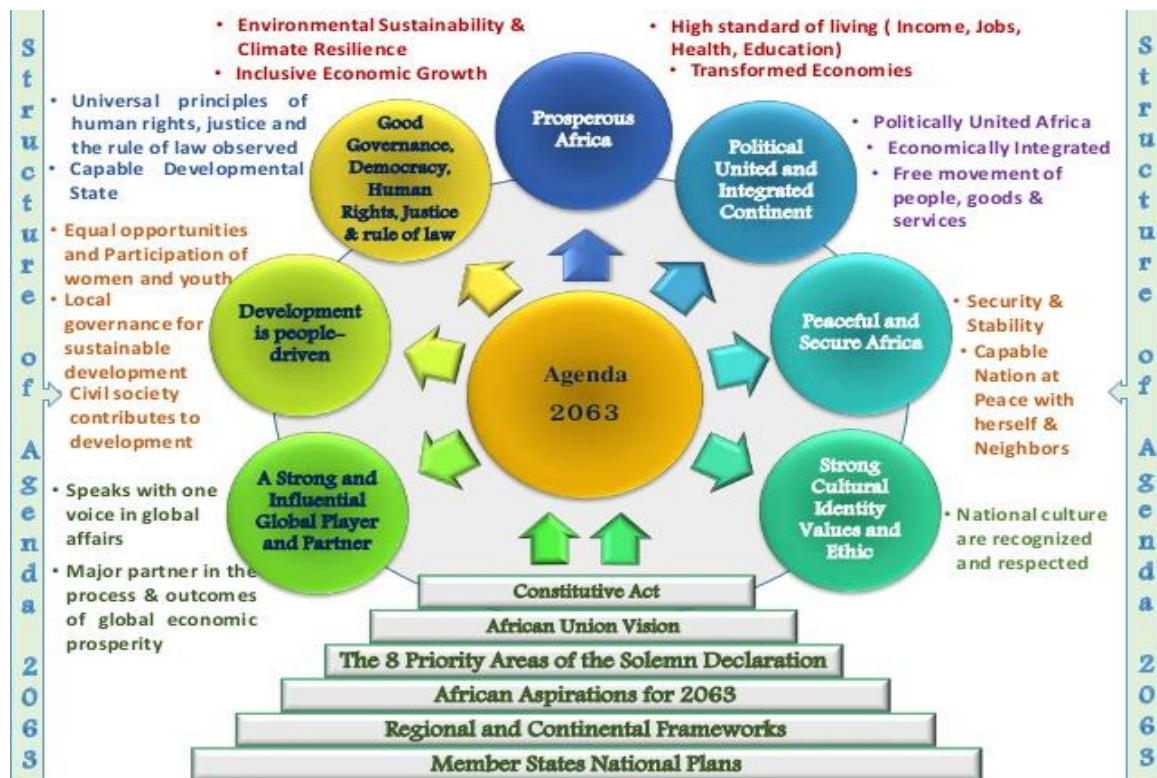


Figure 6. Cultural Policy and the African Union's Agenda 2063  
by R. S. Mabote, Directorate of Strategic Policy Planning, AUC

### Educational Aims of Agenda 2063

The framers of Agenda 2063, agree with nationalist leaders like Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, agree on the role and function of education in the dynamic process of sustainable national development. Education and youth development are therefore critical elements and an efficient tool for the execution of Agenda 2063 (DeGhetto et al, 2016). The Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16-25) adopted in January 2016 is the education platform of Agenda 2063 which the Union hopes to meet between 2016 and 2025 (African Union Commission (AUC), 2015). CESA comprises of six principles and seven pillars (as I represent in Figure 7), which the AU

has designated as essential to create a new African citizen who can function as an effective change agent for ensuring sustainable development in SSA (AUC, 2015).

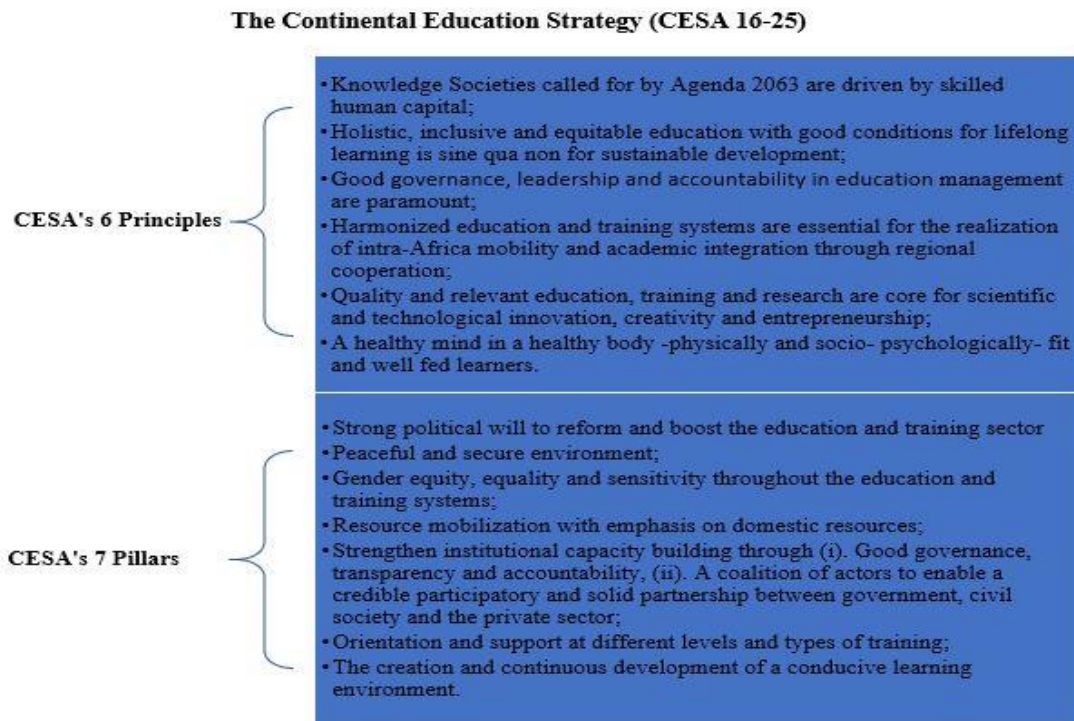


Figure 7. The Continental Education Strategy (CESA 16-25)

The architects of Agenda 2063 have therefore identified the peoples of Africa as its most precious resource and highlight the need for investment in their well-being. Within this background, an integral part of CESA's pillar three is the goal of "Investing in people first through education." In this area, the plan anticipates expanding quality education (in terms of competency and access); strengthening science, technology, innovation and research as well to enhance skills in traditional professional roles – such as teachers, nurses, doctors and lawyers – to meet the rapidly changing demands and dynamics of SSA economies (AUC, 2015).

Nevertheless, the education components of Agenda 2063 are still in its initial stages and as yet their pedagogical basis or assumptions are not quite apparent (Addaney, 2018). However, glimpses of language from publications detailing the goals of education and the overwhelming presence of neoliberalism in all other areas within SSA, I expect that a significant portion of the curriculum will be oriented towards a neoliberal pedagogy with its focus on preparing Africans to serve the imperial project as workers and consumers through “commercialization, commodification, privatization and militarization of education” (Giroux, 2011, p. 12) rather than develop critical thinking skills to fully realize the aims of Agenda 2063. Indeed, whilst CESA 16-25 is being presented as a vehicle for SSA’s transformation in education and training, it is an integral part of SSA’s commitment to fulfill the prescriptive requirements of Sustainable Development Goals 4 (SDG4) as represented in Figure 6.<sup>147</sup>, which is “to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning” (UN, 2017b). Therefore, in the next section, I put forth an expanded vision of education aligned with Agenda 2063. These recommendations include not only access and competency, but also critical and reflexive aspects that can further the goals of reducing extreme poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. These recommendations are based on examination of the crisis of poverty and underdevelopment from a critical analysis perspective in answer to

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<sup>147</sup>The SDGs replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. The SDGs are the prescribed set of policy agreements between the financial institutions (e.g. the World Bank, IMF etc) that SSA nations are required to implement in their various economies as part of their aid, debt repayment, grants and loans plans. These requirements are all based on free market neoliberal policies.

my research question: How can the understanding of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA through critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory open up possibilities for reframing/reconceptualizing education to address these challenges within the framework of Agenda 2063?

### **A Critical and Expanded Vision of Education Aligned to Agenda 2063**

Through a critical analysis of the root causes and factors inherent to its existence, I have conveyed in previous chapters that poverty and underdevelopment are socially constructed phenomena, and as such possibilities exist for changing these etched realities. One such opportunity is the role that a robust, relevant and critical pedagogy organic to the realities of SSA can (and must) play a role in responding to SSA's poverty and underdevelopment realities.

### **My Philosophical Understandings of Education**

My understanding of the aim and functions of education is consistent with my ontological presumptions which are rooted in the praxis of social justice. Therefore, I seek to examine the wider and hidden context of issues in the social world as well to unmask power relations by examining its constitution and by specifically examining how the leadership class manipulates power to their benefit and equally the manners in which they continue to dominate others not part of the elite. Considering this personal imperative, I am drawn to the philosophical and epistemological considerations of pragmatism, particularly epitomized by the pedagogical practices of critical theory, critical pedagogy and Deweyan pragmatism in presenting an expanded vision of education aligned to Agenda 2063.

## **Critical Pedagogy (A Summary) and African Theorizing on Education**

Critical theorists argue that societies including systems of education are replete with oppressive structures that marginalize and oppress others. Thus, a fundamental essence of critical theory is its emphasis on the use of critique as the preferred method of investigation to deconstruct these oppressive and exploitative structures. The ultimate goal is constructing a society based on the ideas of social justice and equity. Many theoretical approaches are rooted within the paradigms of critical theory, given its emancipating tendencies. Critical pedagogy, according to Kincheloe & Steinburg (1997), “is the term used to describe what emerges when critical theory encounters education” (p. 24). A variety of new approaches have flourished by proponents of critical pedagogy. Nevertheless, in spite of the multiple diverse strands and analyses, critical pedagogues agitate that a purposeful and sincere education must “help students develop a consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, connect knowledge to power and agency, and learn to read the word and the world as part of a broader struggle for justice and democracy’ (Giroux, 2011, p. 152). As such an education based on emancipation, establishing social justice and a democratic culture ensures the cultivation of citizens “as change agents, empowering students to question the very systems in which they live and work, and to create a society that is more equitable and just” (Zacko-Smith, 2012, p.2008).

In theorizing on using elements of critical pedagogy for possible answers to my research question, although I make reference as necessary to other critical pedagogues, I however base my perspectives on the conceptions of Freire and Dewey as I explained in

chapter 5, and also on ideas articulated by African nationalist leaders who offered education philosophies that were grounded in the African reality.

To summarize however, Freire (1993) argues that the processes of education are never neutral – they can be used as an instrument of domination or liberation. In other words, education is naturally political. Liberation for Freire rests on the dichotomy between the ‘oppressor’ and the ‘oppressed’, or in the language of postcolonial theory, the colonizer and the colonized. The oppressor/colonizer maintain their place of privilege and dominance in society through control of institution, including those of education where the flow and quality of knowledge is heavily regulated. The oppressed/colonized deprived of active and meaningful participation in their society is dehumanized and become submerged in the knowledge reality of the colonizer and must thus exist under an imposed “culture of silence” or hegemony according to Gramsci (1971). It is only through “critical ‘*conscientização*’” which Freire defines as “to learn to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, p. 17) that the oppressed can be able to gain a true understanding of the structures that sustains their silence culture, in order to agitate for social change.

For the purpose of this dissertation, I am interested in Dewey’s theory on education and its linkages to establishing a democratic culture in society through education. For Dewey, (1916), democracy encompasses more than the right to vote. Rather, it “is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience” (p. 93). In order to balance the interests of individuals and groups within it, an education system should produce informed and educated citizens engaged in collective



civic engagement, capable to understand, interrogate and articulate upon the social dynamics of their society.

Both Freire and Dewey agree that critical education is necessary for social well-being mirroring the education philosophies of SSA's nationalist leaders, such as Nkrumah (Ghana), Nyerere (Tanzania), Machel (Mozambique) as well as Modibo Keita of Mali. In the midst of immediate post-colonial posturing, these theorists were engaged in critical reflection on the goals and practices of education. They believed that the region can only be developed by Africans, for as history indicates no other nations can claim an altruistic interest in the region. Therefore, education from their perspective was to ensure psychological as well as physical liberation. As such a critical theory of education as perceived by African theorist must critically evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of colonial education; a re-examination of traditional African education, and exploration of educational alternatives for liberation and achievement of an authentic African national identity (Woolman, 2001).

For example, according to Nkrumah's (1970) philosophy:

a man's education must also be measured in terms of the soundness of his judgment of people and things, and in his power to understand and appreciate the needs of his fellow men, and to be of service to them. The educated man should be so sensitive to the conditions around him that he makes it his chief endeavor to improve those conditions (p.6).

To achieve this, Nkrumah advocated that education should take into account the totality of the African experience; it should synthesize indigenous traditional African world views, Islamic ways of knowing and euro-Christian influences brought about by the

colonial experience, to create a society that will lead eventually to the harmonious growth and development of its people.

According to Nyerere, education at all levels serves a dual purpose of transmitting sociocultural factors as well as acculturating citizens as active members in maintaining and developing society. The individual and society are inextricably linked in a symbiotic relationship. Nyerere stressed that education is a tool of liberation (1974), and it is through liberation that Africans can expect to be self-reliant (1967). To this end, education must be a socially, economically, psychologically, culturally, physically, intellectually and spiritually liberating. Such level of individual freedom is integral to establishing democratic societies where confident individual can be involved in and function responsibly and independently in their various roles. Furthermore, in their symbiotic relationship, individual freedom is by extension liberation for the whole society, as members are subsequently able to apply knowledge to perceive and subsequently address challenges within their society.

Also, in immediate post independent Mozambique, President Machel's socialist mode of education entailed, as detailed by Woolman (2001), the elimination of illiteracy, liberation from capitalist mentality, elimination of the negative aspects of African traditional culture, empowerment of the masses through education, and restructuring of schools as learning communities based on trust between teachers and pupils. Likewise, the African Socialism of Prime Minister Modibo Keita in Mali was to confront the psychological impact of colonialism by using African-centered education practices for the decolonization of the mind (Yena, 1978). In sum, these visions of education are based

on an all-around access, quality and education is tailored to the relevant needs of the African people.

### **Societal Framework**

In the midst of the Great Depression in the US, according to Zuga (1992) reformers such as Counts and Dewey reacting to the large scale societal misery as a result of economic stagnation were advocating a restructuring of education in the country. They argued that the education of the day was not specifically geared to address the pressing concerns in society, prompting Counts as expressed in Zuga (1992) to envision that “the times are literally crying for a new vision of American destiny” (p.49). Similarly, SSA’s over prolonged misery, because of its interactions with the oppressive structures and mechanisms of the imperial project, also prompt me to envision a new vision of African destiny.

Since its forced assimilation into the ‘chronopolitics’ of the imperial project (Miyoshi (1993), SSA is still unable to extricate itself from persistent and entrenched clutches. Furthermore, increased and intense exchanges in this new phase of global interactions compound the fate of SSA and makes contact with other nations or bloc unavoidable. Certainly, it is inevitable that SSA with its abundance of immense natural as well as human resources will always face such challenges as external forces attempt to exert influence and control to access these resources. This is true of the imperial project as its nations work to ensure their goals as well for a brief time the former USSR during the Cold War and now China as it too moves outside of its national borders to seek resources and markets (Haag, 2011).

I present that our actions and interactions as Africans with these contacts and influences determine our success and failure. Our attitudes and mindsets to engage with the oppressive and authoritative manifestations of the imperial project since independence and even to recent Chinese presence have been extremely detrimental (as evidenced by all qualitative and quantitative indices) to the hopes and aspirations of succeeding African generations. Within this background, I propose that an education system grounded in the praxis of critical pedagogy within the parameters of Agenda 2063 that will produce equally grounded Africans is vital to address the current state of regional arrested development in our interactions with the outside world. I am in other words like Counts and Dewey as mentioned above envisaging a collective endeavor to reconstruct our education systems for competency in preparing Africans to negotiate these relationships between and amongst other nations to serve our continental interests.

In mapping my arguments for the potential benefit of an education system based on the principles of critical pedagogy in SSA, an understanding of the historical, cultural, economic, and political dynamics as I have represented above is imperative. This is so because as expressed by Kellner (2003), “a critical theory of education must be rooted in a critical theory of society” (p.13). Such knowledge ensures an understanding of the “relations of domination and subordination, contradictions and openings for progressive social change, and transformative practices” (Kellner, p.13) as it pertains to addressing poverty and underdevelopment in SSA as I have laid out in previous chapters of this dissertation. Indeed, such an approach is necessary as it allows abstract theorizing to be put to practice for adequate redress of SSA’s societal needs. I therefore submit that a

pertinent education based on critical pedagogy within the context of SSA must firstly factor the dynamics inherent in its sustained poverty and underdevelopment travails; also, the deeply embedded subconscious feeling of inferiority complex that plagues the African psyche due to the prolonged immersion in imperial pedagogy; and finally, privileging SSA's epistemological constructs.

My usage of the term education denotes learning that can take place within the formal setting (schools, universities) as well as informal environments (media, popular culture) and non-formal education in flexible learning spaces that intersect between formal and informal learning environments (social and adult education and distance learning settings).

### **Critical Pedagogy Aligned to Agenda 2063**

Critical pedagogy's promises an education based on emancipation, establishing social justice and a democratic culture. On the other hand, is SSA with its equally persistent dynamics as I mention above. Therefore, I put forth that the application of critical pedagogy to SSA's education system, should be an urgent priority as it seeks redress for these societal challenges through Agenda 2063. As such, my vision of an alignment of critical pedagogy with Agenda 2063 comprises of firstly pedagogy of decolonization based on Freirean principles that rejects the banking system of education. Subsequently, I recommend a critical pedagogy for reconstruction, rooted in a problem-posing education. This problem-posing education embodies Freire's concept of '*conscientização*' as an avenue to establish a democratic culture and social justice in SSA.

**Critical pedagogy for decolonizing - rejecting the banking concept of education.** A critical pedagogy for decolonizing rests on the assumption, as I argue in this dissertation, that elites within oppressive systems such as the imperial project maintain their dominance and conversely ensure the subordination of the masses through hegemonic control of the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres in society. The dominant ideological frameworks are reproduced in institutions of learning “through the curricular content and design, the instructional practices, the social organization of learning, and the forms of evaluation that inexorably sort and label students into enduring categories of success and failure of schooling” (Tejeda et al, p.6).

Freire (1970) denounces these practices that are dominant in traditional education as oppressive and authoritarian, given the intention to silence human agency. Freire refers to this system metaphorically as the banking model of education. In such an education system, knowledge is “owned” by the teacher who then makes “deposits” to the students. The students subsequently receive, memorize and repeat (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011). This deposited knowledge however, has minimal bearings on the students’ realities as they are not intended to tackle current societal issues, but to perpetuate the dominant status quo. Thus, students remain passive objects in relation to their education experiences. Dewey (1916) likewise also echoed these reasoning. According to Dewey, an education based on the concepts of banking method stifles growth as it does not leave room for students to engage in critical problem-solving roles. Education, Freire (1993) argues must be concerned with engaging students in the social and political realms to create conditions conducive to equity and social justice.

The praxis inherent to a critical pedagogy of decolonization recognizes and challenges these representations of hegemony and ensures that learning institutions function as concrete sites for cultivating and sustaining indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing thereby giving opportunities to cultivate critical consciousness amongst the oppressed. These perspectives are reflective of the aforementioned African critics.

A critical pedagogy of decolonization is vital for the success of education within the confines of Agenda 2063 for several reasons. In theory, Agenda 2063 with its commendable and expanded goals presents an optimistic future for SSA. However, given the fate of other continental wide measures and modes of associations that have not fulfilled their expected potentials, there is significant unease amongst scholars on the practical implementations and thus the future of this agenda (Addaney, 2018).

One of my concerns is that the project is plowing ahead without adequate consideration and attempts to explain to ourselves the current state of the region, before embarking on remedies. In the language of critical theory, an understanding is needed of how the various splintered but interconnected parts function in connection within the larger complex totality as well as the way power is manipulated to maintain the status quo (McLaren & Kincheloe, 2002). In other words, how have we, as a people or a continent, come to face such dire circumstances, and the structures that uphold these dire circumstances? The African adage – ‘if you do not know where you are going, at least know where you come’ explains the essence of this sentiment. Of course, imperial pedagogy has contributed to a redefined orientation of the African existence to fit the explanations of the civilizing mission. Therefore, a critical pedagogy of decolonization as

per Smith (2012) includes confronting the “unfinished business” with our colonial past, “which traps us in the project of modernity..... as there can be no ‘postmodern’ for us until we have settled some business of the modern” (p. 36). Delving into the past brings with it opportunities to gain alternative histories and knowledge, and of course further insights into alternative ways of conducting our affairs, for example in the proposed plans of Agenda 2063. Furthermore, a continued unawareness of our history will only result in our perpetuating the mistakes instead of seizing the opportunities to rectify the shortcomings of our predecessors that give rise to the current impasse in our region. Such a situation will prolong the tragedy in SSA because poverty and underdevelopment is, after all, according to Maathai (2001), the most pressing concern and challenge that is identified by SSA leadership. As such I call for a critical review of education to unmask the deficit of imperial education in its continued problematic relationships with Africans.

***Interrogating dominant epistemologies – critical reviews of education systems.***

A major aspect of a potential education paradigm is to address the notion of “the reach of imperialism in our head” (Smith, 2012). Mental colonization I submit hampers productive interactions with the imperial project. Therefore, our current understandings of the dominant Eurocentric paradigm can be demystified by deconstructing the past. As such, similar to the calls of nationalists’ leaders, I advocate for a critical review of education systems since independence in the region as a fundamental step to any further education reform. By all accounts, the institution of education has undergone several attempts at reforms (McGrath, 2011), but it is obvious that the poverty and underdevelopment status quo persists. However, within the spirit of Agenda 2063, a



rigorous and pertinent examination must focus amongst other lines of research as deemed necessary by officials on:

1. Which cultural model/s or education paradigm is privileged?
2. What were the goals of these systems?
3. Have they been of strategic benefit to address the national and developmental needs of any individual SSA nation or the region in general? If yes, can these be replicated?
4. What previous reforms have been undertaken? What were the results of these reforms? Were any of these reforms implemented – if not why not? What is/are the postmortem on these implemented reforms in terms of success or failures?

Although the answers to the above questions might appear apparent, it is important to note, as I indicated earlier, that imperial education as applied within the context of SSA is cloaked in the hegemonic language as creating a way out of poverty for Africans by acquiring skills and knowledge that lead to gainful employment and ultimate acceptance as a postcolonial individual (Okoli, 2012). As such the underlying assumptions that belie the current imperial project cannot be easily discerned, especially within the backdrop of the qualitative evidence of poverty.

Nevertheless, a critical review will indicate, as I have demonstrated, a Eurocentric focus on education, as evidenced by the curriculum practices during colonialism and the current neoliberal pedagogy, with aims that are in complete contrast to the vision of education that our independence leaders aspired to. This is so because it is a model based on the banking method of education as I explained above. The imperial project possesses

“ownership” of knowledge continues to successfully use education to “deposit” their ideologies onto the minds of Africans. Such a model of education is akin to structures of an oppressive society that is more intent on preserving the status quo rather than in instituting or challenging unjust social relations given its intention to silence African agency (McInerney, 2009). The more Africans strive to store these deposits entrusted to them by the imperial project, the more it become less likely for them to develop critical consciousness that can enable them to decode their realities. This prolonged immersion in the banking education obscures within the African psyche the true nature and intent of these various “deposits” of the imperial project. This inability on the part of the African to construct their own reality Freire (1993) refers to as the “culture of silence”. Such a colonized mind hinders the acculturation of Africans as agents of social change, thereby limiting any prospect of tackling our most pressing challenges. However, through critical analysis; Africans can discern the tacit and covert values that underpin imperial education (Eisner, 1994) creating possibilities for input towards improving their society.

***Reviving dormant epistemologies – a critical but inevitable return to the past.*** A critical assessment of the nearly two centuries of the practice of imperial education in SSA will reveal its Eurocentric nature and its inherent grounding in the banking method. It will also confirm that although imperial education has served to globalize Africa, its processes and contents suffer from partial incongruity with African realities (Dipholo, 2013). This persistent orientation of education towards Eurocentric models upholds a learning process that continues to successfully produce Africans as cultural captives (Mazrui, 1978), alienated from their cultures, but at the same time not fully welcomed in

the imperial fold, engraining a deep sense of inferiority complex and an incapacity to address its realities.

Education pursued in this manner is contrary to the principles of critical pedagogy. Such a model is not only deeply engaged in reproducing the cultural values of the imperial project, but is totally incapable of establishing emancipatory practices, establishing a democratic culture, nor fulfill social justice aims. It is instead an education system with standards of excellence dictated outside our communities' but which on the other hand ensures the cultivation of Africans, whose cultural referents are not grounded in the African reality, thereby diminishing possibilities of addressing SSA's challenges (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Salehi & Mohammadkhani, 2013).

In response to the accompanying residual effects of psychological imperialism induced by imperial education, a vision of education pertinent to SSA must include the necessity to undo the mental programming through a critical pedagogy of decolonization/rejection of the banking method of education. The aim is to de-clutter the myth of European racial and cultural superiority by provincializing Europe (Chakrabarty, 2000) and privileging the African reality in its totality within all spheres of society. The process of decolonization must firstly address the ahistorical manners in which SSA is presented to Africans themselves. That is although we as a people are aware of a pre-colonial era, not much emphasis or interest is placed on an in-depth discovery of that period in history in order to decipher the influences, as well as to make connections to our present ways of knowing. Such level of neglect, again per Smith (2012) limits our access to an alternative knowledge base as well as perpetuates the continued

marginalization and exclusion in our relationship with the imperial project. In this way, the dominant perspective, not just for Africans, according to Arowolo (2010) remains that a worthy or necessary history of SSA commenced upon contact with the imperial powers. As historical representations are based on power relationships, Africans must then remain content to extol and privilege the stories and civilization of the imperial project.

As such, I contend that a critical pedagogy for decolonization must be grounded in the African familiarity with their political, socio-cultural, and economic histories. These pre-colonial points of reference must include for example a comprehensive knowledge of the various African civilizations to include the modes/manners and methods of imperial contact including struggles for independence and African's responses to these contacts. Essential components also include pre-colonial tribal/ethnic/religious/ linguistic interactions; the reasons that resulted in the configuration of modern African states; African concepts of communal living; the goals and functions of education; pre-colonial pedagogy; indigenous knowledge and the other ways in which the imperial project interrupted indigenous SSA pre-colonial societies. Such an approach recognizes and affirms the cultural capital of Africans within their education systems

As the AU moves towards greater integration amongst SSA nation states, exposure to our collective history will make for easy stepping stones to implement this goal. For example, according to Zeleza (2008), all SSA wars and conflicts are rooted in its colonial legacy. Exposure and subsequent understanding of pre-colonial

tribal/ethnic/religious/ linguistic interactions and configurations is an avenue to lessen these simmering tensions to make an integrated SSA more feasible.

Of course, learning about these phases of SSA's history should not be relegated to cursory examination as is the case in some education settings (Eten, 2015). An African-centered immersion approach is crucial so we can understand the bigger picture of our role and history within the wider global historical context. Comprehensive exposure to pre-colonial Africa dynamics is vital to show a civilization with functioning political and socio-economic institutions, that were in certain domains developing on par or even above that of western civilization (Kane, 2016), but which was rudely interrupted by the violent and systematic oppression of the imperial project. Access to such knowledge is essential to portray a culture of African agency in direct challenge to the representation of Africa through Orientalism (Said, 1978) that has prevailed since the onset of the imperial encounter, solidifying feelings of deep inferiority as Africans lost confidence and faith in themselves. A SSA viewed from such positive and worthwhile perspective by its people will induce a mental revolution and a gradual basic change of mindset vis a vis our assigned position of inferiority in the African's relationship to the imperial project. In other words, an eventual removal of the cloak of inferiority which is in essence an indication of our position as equals and not Children of a Lesser God, who are able to build upon systems consistent to our ways of knowing and interacting with the world. This mental liberation that has potential to lead to physical action is consistent with the emancipatory principles of critical pedagogy as espoused by Freire (1970).

**A reconstruction – an African centered pedagogy.** Ultimately, the reconstruction of phenomenon after deconstruction is an integral component of critical perspectives. In the subsequent paragraphs, I present ideas for a restructured model of education in the wake of my rejection of the banking method of education as a possibility to address the dynamics of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA, I examine above.

The banking model of education is an example of an education based on domination, indoctrination and dehumanization, all inconsistent with the principles of critical pedagogy and as such unsuitable to attend to SSA realities. This is because imperial education continues to enforce pedagogical contents that are consistent with domestication and the perpetration of the culture of silence that hampers the capacity for Africans to initiate pathways to sustainable development in the region. Kellner (2003) in summarizing Freire agrees that the oppressed or colonized Africans are surveilled by the structures and mechanisms of the imperial project have not had opportunities to partake of the benefits of education. Furthermore, reasons Kellner, not only should they not expect to receive such an opportunity, but must organize to educate themselves by developing a “pedagogy of the oppressed”. Hence my use of the term to recommend a vision of critical education grounded in this concept as an alternative to the deposition notion of knowledge inherent in the banking model of imperial education (McInerney, 2009).

In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1993) theorized on an alternative to the banking model of education which seeks to subvert the contradictions and tensions of domination and indoctrination that characterize the relationship between the

oppressor/colonizer and the oppressed/colonized. Consequently, the objective of such an education is based on emancipation whereby the oppressed/colonized in addition to gaining intellectual knowledge can “undertake a transformation from object to subject, and thus properly become a subject and more fully developed human beings” (Kellner, 2003, p. 55), through “critical ‘*conscientização*’. Critical *conscientização* thus implies the ability to perceive oppression within social, political, and economic realms and to encourage others to take action on the learning against oppressive systems to affect change (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014), halting the culture of silence enforced on the colonized/oppressed by the colonizer/oppressor.

A learning process integral to the development of a pedagogy of the oppressed is identified by Freire as a problem-posing education system. Learning conducted within a problem posing method is diametrically opposed to the banking concept. It is an active approach to education based on the praxis of dialogical pedagogy. In such sites of learning, the flow of knowledge consists of bidirectional and dynamic actions between students and educators. As such, the development of ideas thoughts, explanation and understanding of one’s realities are based on notions of liberating dialogues. Such a dialectical nature of knowledge and thought is a necessary condition for those in the learning space to gain a sense of autonomy and responsibility as well as to take ownership of the learning process and the information created therein (Goura, 2012).

An education grounded in these principles and practice, according to Giroux (2011) is the cornerstone of nation building as it facilitates the process of deliberative democracy. It grooms the political agency amongst its citizens to enable them to

challenge dominant pedagogies with the possibilities of enacting new ones. This is the kind of education envisaged by Dewey (1916) that can sustain a democratic culture. I put forward that these ideas of Freire and Dewey, has much to offer SSA as a colonized region in its attempts to reformulate its education system with the framework of Agenda 2063. I call this potential paradigm an African-centered pedagogy of the oppressed or an African-centered critical pedagogy of education.

*An African centered pedagogy of the oppressed.* An African centered version of critical pedagogy as represented by Freire and Dewey above firstly draws upon a liberatory and emancipatory pedagogy through the approaches of humanization, critical *conscientização* and problem-posing education to establish a democratic culture. It also must take account and synthesize the posturing of African education philosophies as articulated by nationalist leaders as they sought to address SSA's immediate post-colonial political, economic and social challenges. These African critical theorists also viewed education as a praxis of liberation. They envisaged education as a process through which Africans can understand the challenges as well as the opportunities inherent in the realities of post-independence SSA and act as change agents to address them.

According to Giroux, (2011) "any analysis of education can only be understood in relation to existing social and cultural formations and the power relations these imply" (p. 57). In the case of SSA these are the structures and mechanism of the imperial project and their corresponding legacies – poverty and underdevelopment. Consistent with the conceptualization of African leaders, an adaptable and practical pedagogy of the oppressed within the context of SSA must empower Africans within learning spaces, to



understand the nature of their oppression and identify neocolonial structures and mechanisms of the imperial project as playing a major contributory role to uphold their current reality. They must also be able to understand and subsequently deconstruct the dynamics of a false generosity (Freire, 1993) inherent in their interactions with the imperial project. That is, by engaging in critical reflections Africans are able to decipher that the role of many of the international organizations present in SSA is in essence to maintain the imperial status quo; and furthermore, the various manners in which they conspire to sustain their impoverishment. Such levels of critical '*conscientização*' Freire (1993) contend can only be achieved through mutual dialog and interactions with other Africans. These connections and relationships are liberating in that, it is only through such exchanges can Africans not only come to better understand their circumstance, but also serves as a mechanism to reaffirm that the current state of poverty and underdevelopment is not inevitable and through collectively posing what, why and how questions they can seek redress.

Finally, such pedagogy must be a platform to return Africans to their state of humanity after an over prolonged culture of silence within the imperial project. In other words, a transformative process that facilitates them to regain critical consciousness of their context in relationship to present realities; as complete individuals with the agency to transform the current African challenge. Accepting our humanity also means an acceptance of our "unfinished" nature (Freire, 1998) as an essential human condition. Acknowledgment of this incompleteness is a constant reminder to Africans, that although conditioned by the forces of the imperial project, being engaged in mutual and constant

critical reflection with other Africans forces us to be aware of such conditioning, and strive to make “history out of possibility, not simply resigned to fatalistic stagnation, (p.54). Therefore, a practical pedagogy of the oppressed must operate to critique, make apparent the hidden and apparent the foundations of the imperial project and strive for critical intervention for change. Being change agents, also includes adopting on a pragmatic basis those available resources that can further our development goals, for example, synthesizing the three ways of African knowing as explained by Nkrumah (1970) above. In the remaining section, I offer practical examples of how an Afro-Centric critical pedagogy can be implemented within SSA to address poverty and underdevelopment in the region.

*Agenda 2063 - A way forward.* Particularly, in a region where the ideas of democratic culture is often conflated and relegated to the voting process of the liberal democratic or a ‘majoritarian democracy’ and where usually governments implement their various plans without much input from their respective citizens, Agenda 2063 calls for action for all segments of society to work together and build a prosperous and united Africa are positive initial first steps for instituting a democratic culture in SSA, especially given the clout attached to the AU by Africans in general. This appeal to all Africans to partake in implementing the AU’s vision is synonymous of a problem posing approach, with all its positive and useful underpinnings. If indeed this theoretical pronouncement of the AU is matched with practical applications, this holds much promise for a beginning phase for addressing SSA’s challenges. It can serve as an impetus for self-reliance (Nyerere, 1967) as Africans begin to address their issues independently. It is within this

background, that I join in the dialogue, specifically in reference to its education component, to critique dominant conception of imperial education with a view to implementing critical insights that can radically address and transform the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in the region.

*Aligning national aims and priorities to education.* Acknowledgement and acceptance are the motivational initial steps to enact change. My idea for a pedagogy of the oppressed consistent with the needs of SSA thus presupposes the internalization and acceptance of a critical pedagogy of decolonizing as I discuss in the previous section above will ease the tensions associated with coming to terms with SSA's current state of affairs. Even with several attempts at education reform, a plethora of evidence support the reality that imperial education has not been to the collective advantage of our continent. Its elitist education and irrelevant curriculum rooted in neoliberal constructs perpetuate skills set and bodies of knowledge not vigorous enough to enforce significant change, perpetuating the culture of silence. Education institutions in place now in SSA are apparently not conducive environments for challenging real problems of social inequalities that engender poverty and underdevelopment or for encouraging possibilities to enact social change (Nyamjoh, 2004). This is because Africans in general are still entrenched in the culture of silence and therefore unable to formulate independent agendas for change. Even Agenda 2063, is still heavily influenced within imperial logic.

However, to chart a new course, within Agenda 2063 involves articulating on an independent continental wide regional development plan on the way forward by engaging in problem posing dialogical conversations with each other. Pertinent discussions in a

problem posing dialogue must focus on the feasibility of current education structures to aid in this transition. African independence leaders articulate not only for an organic system of education, but that such models of education must be aligned to reflect and sustain national priorities, aims and aspirations, as well the capacity to translate national ideologies into curriculum (Njoroge and Bennaars, 1986).

To this end, an interrogation of previous reform as I lay out in the section on *interrogating dominant epistemologies – critical reviews of education systems* above, will bring further insights on the reasons these ideas for reforms were stalled. Nevertheless, pertinent and potential avenues for critical engagements that can serve as foundational to any future curriculum initiatives include:

1. What role/s do we envisage as Africans in this era of neoliberal globalization?

Are we destined and content to being mere spectators whose fate is dictated by other nations? Do we envisage a future as active players on the global stage to steer the course of our own destiny? If we are content with our current role then the current education provisions of Agenda 2063 can remain unchanged. As active players, we must however engage in critical reflections by interrogating our views on education as follows:

- a) What are our national aims/goals and priorities?
- b) How can we transform these goals into a sustainable curriculum?
- c) What are the roles and functions of education in our region?

- d) What kind of African should our education systems produce? Will their education serve to address the poverty and underdevelopment issues of SSA?
- e) Do the current education plans in Agenda 2063 suffice to acculturate Africans to the challenges of neoliberal globalization?
- f) If not, what kind of educational framework can we develop to facilitate our interactions with neoliberal globalization?
- g) Is the neoliberal pedagogy prevalent in all areas of education in SSA consistent with the Agenda 2063? For example, will the privatization of education (for example in Liberia) produce citizens with the mindset relevant to the aims of Agenda 2063?

As we reflect on possible answers and solutions to the above questions, I propose that we engage in critical examinations of models of education from other nations and initiate within the spirit of critical pedagogy a process of dialog to decipher what aspects of these reforms are conducive and pertinent to our goals for critical education within the context of SSA.

***Critical reflections on current education configurations.*** Currently the mechanistic acquisition of knowledge is dominant in SSA. A great deal of relevance and importance is attached to end-of-year test purposes and passing examinations. The resulting certificates students acquire are mostly for individual material success (livelihood and employment), mostly in disciplines and subjects usually not consistent with the current needs of SSA. Furthermore, given the lack of a viable transfer system,

the knowledge students' gain typically remains in the ivory tower of academia without practical implementation in the general community at large. Education is indeed not viewed from a long-term academic achievement perspective or even as a vehicle for other possibilities like creating inquisitive individuals to engage in critical reflection and the cultivation of democratic practices or principles (Karpov, 2013). It is in other words a banking method of education.

Africans immersed in the praxis of critical pedagogy will indeed connect this phenomenon to imperial education, particularly neoliberal pedagogy, which aims to prepare preparing workers and consumers (Fischman & Haas, 2009). For Africans this translates as a way out of poverty by acquiring skills and knowledge consistent with neoliberal ideology. This is the reason Freire (2004), contend that “the power of neoliberal ideology, whose perverse ethic is founded on the laws of the market” (p. 100) is one of the greatest obstacles to critical consciousness.

Nevertheless, an education system based on the concepts of critical pedagogy is one that creates environments for Africans to decode and understand the social world and circumstances of our lived experiences and not just to accumulate a core body of knowledge (Dewey, 1897; Nkrumah, 1970; Freire, 1998). Africans as change agents can ensure therefore that learning processes must include a certain level of synthesis between curricular activities to the economic needs of SSA. This according to Mahmoudi et al (2014) includes establishing direct relationship between curriculum planning and economic production process. To this end, curriculum framers must be required to include pertinent and beneficial knowledge to SSA and its peoples.

There should also be opportunities for transfer of theoretical knowledge into practice by establishing linkages at the local level for ease of implementation. For instance, it is imperative that universities, learning and research institutes such as the Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania and The Juba Valley Agricultural Institute in Somalia, the Forum for Agricultural Research (FARA) and The Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers (CGIAR) establish linkages with local farmers to disseminate their knowledge and expertise for public consumption. The development of such relationships is fundamental to decreasing the crisis of food security issues of shortages which leads to an overwhelming dependence on foreign food aid or food imports. This is in short, an education system geared for preparing Africans for self-reliance as conceptualized by Nyerere (1974).

Likewise, it is an economic reality that countries cannot feasibly exit the poverty cycle through the culture of a dependency cycle as is the case in SSA. An over reliance on foreign aid, debt relief, as well as an over consumption of goods, services and products that the region does not produce results in mass importing from other industrialized nations skewing the balance of trade deficits. All these negatives in turn deprive SSA leaders' autonomy and leave the region open to vagaries from the structures and mechanisms of the imperial project. A level of industrialization must occur to shift the momentum in favor of our national priorities. Sadly, as SSA is still caught up in the culture of silence, there have been no significant actions on reversing these policies.

Like Freire (2004), a learning process couched within the language of emancipatory praxis could enable Africans to understand the connections between the

culture of dependency and the economic policies of the imperial project - the neoliberal agenda remains entrenched. Of course, as change agents, Africans will seek alternative measures. Possible solutions can include taxing the many business schools and institutes that are blossoming in the region to establish avenues that will link their knowledge to facilitate industrialization and lessen import substitution. Such a restructured education with long term goals in mind will address the high rate of unemployment especially amongst youths, facilitate trade between countries in the region and increase the use of indigenous skills and art, thereby fulfilling the role of education to tangible economic purposes for the benefit of African empowerment within our terms (Freire, 1984).

SSA caught up in the colonizer/oppressor and colonized/oppressed dichotomy narrative finds itself subsumed within the wider imperial culture and an enforced culture of silence. This according to Freire (1984) is oppressive given that knowledge and reality are instituted to represent and benefit the colonizer/oppressor. Therefore, in a veritable pedagogy of the oppressed, the needs and social realities of the oppressed/colonized must also factor preeminently on any curriculum planning agenda.

Indeed, Freire's successful interactions with impoverished urban poor and rural peasant communities not only in Brazil, but in other parts of the world (for example Guinea Bissau) are the origins of what we now refer to as critical pedagogy. Hence, Freire (1984) similar to Modibo Keita, understands the importance of basing common education plans to reflect the social realities of the oppressed. I liken this privileging and incorporation of the oppressed and marginalized to a pedagogy of affirmation and validation or the strength-based approach (Cooper, He & Levin, 2011). Such an attitude



to education in the region is in stark contrast to the current neoliberal pedagogy, which ignores the intellectual and cultural milieu of students.

From these perspectives, Africans immersed in an authentic African-centered anti oppressive pedagogy must strive to first reject and reverse as much as possible the practice of privatization of education at all levels of education and its implementation of the imperial notion of neoliberal pedagogy. Again, as part of the oppressive neoliberal globalization agenda that plagues SSA, this model of privatization is one in which non-African edupreneurs in the ‘edubusiness’<sup>148</sup> not only establish schools and higher learning institutions but are actively and integrally involved in curriculum design and implementation, which are typically not reflective of the cultural context of SSA (Varghese, 2004). This imperial education ensures that Africans’ social realities are based on the values of the imperial project and can result in the deep-rooted inferiority complex and loss of self confidence in an African way of life, which is not conducive to the goals of Agenda 2063. Education for liberation according to Freire was a problem posing approach based on dialectics. Therefore Freire (1993) insisted that “a pre-made education is one which will keep the oppressed and without freedom” (p. 77). This of course is the reality in SSA.

On the other hand, Africans engaged in the larger struggle can instead insist on an education that is relevant to the cultural realities of SSA. Such an educational paradigm can include learning environments infused with elements from Africans three

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<sup>148</sup>Edupreneurs are investors who inject much need cash in the defunct and derelict education systems in SSA.

epistemological constructs as advocated by Nkrumah (1970). In other words, relevant aspects of these ways of knowing can be an integral to developing an education system capable of addressing poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Indeed, Senegalese philosopher Kane (1963), for example agrees that Africans especially in this era of globalization can ‘copy’ and ‘borrow’ ideas and practices that are deemed valuable and useful in the quest to improve upon the lives of people.

For example, in wa Thiongo’s (1965) fictional book *The River Between*, faced with an ever-encroaching British colonial machine, Chege instructs Waiyaki (his son and hero of the story) to go learn the ways of the white man in order to gain the necessary insights to change the life of the people. Waiyaki however must avoid being contaminated in ‘their vices’. I take ‘vice’ to signify the actions, practices and policies which can be considered inconsistent with the cohesive and communal nature of pre-colonial SSA, thereby threatening its survival. In other words, whilst Africans are open to non-organic cultural values and standards, we should equally be vigilant not to embark upon those cultural referents that pose threat to our socioeconomic and political order. From this perspective, by being prescient in our choices, the potentials of these three knowledge bases to the African populace cannot be underestimated. Drawing upon those relevant and complementary aspects of knowing, will ensure a SSA that remains culturally grounded, but at the same time able to play a significant role on the international scene to the best of its interests.

From these above perspective, I present that elements of the ideas developed by Vygotskian scholars Fred Newman and Lois Holzman (2009) is an example that can be

copied as a potential avenue to address some of SSA's issues. In a pushback to traditional interpretive cognition, Vygotsky stressed upon the individual as a social being and that the inherent dependence between individuals and their environment is to be achieved through the "revolutionary practice of activity" (Freeman & Newman, 1999). As activists, individuals exercise "their power to create and recreate their world, which is inseparable from themselves" – a social, collective and ensemble activity" (Holzman, 2009, p. 107). As psychologists, Freeman and Newman are engaged in developing informal learning environments for children, youths and adults that emphasizes these social interactions and social creative processes.

An example of such an environment is the All Stars Project established for African American children and youths in underprivileged neighborhoods in the US. Participants in this after school project are encouraged not only to "come out" as poor but can engage creatively and playfully in the revolutionary practice of activity to change their circumstance (Fulani, 2013). Through various medium - leadership training, experimental theater and volunteer initiatives youths, the program encourages its youths to broaden their experiences of the world. In particular, the Talent Shows are opportunities for students to express their life stories and experiences in various ways.

These concepts and practices are indeed consistent with African values and therefore possible to Africanize for ease of implementation. For example, the emphasis on the collective is reminiscent of Nyerere's philosophy (1967: 1974) which emphasizes the non-distinction between the individual and the self. Furthermore, the talent shows are representations of imitative play, again in line with African traditional education. It is for

these reasons that the All Stars Project is currently making inroads with a branch in the Mukono District of Uganda. Students are involved in grassroots community development activities as they perform their African version of revolutionary activity.

Given the trends of globalization and the cultural *mélanges* that has emerged, other non-western nations have implemented variants of western values in ways that are complementary to a vision for their respective nations. China for example is vigilant in its relationship with neoliberal ideologies (Nonini, 2008). It picks and discards on its own terms components that are not deemed valuable or relevant to progress their nation's development agenda. Nevertheless, SSA nations in general are still in the process of deconstructing these processes, so the tendency remains, however, to lean to the default position of implementing the value system as dictated by the imperial project.

However, there are instances in SSA where values integrally connected to the three ways of African knowing have been implemented in SSA. The Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda after the 1994 genocide is an exemplar of such a mechanism. According to the UN (2014), the judicial response was pursued on three levels. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, set up by United Nations Security Council, was responsible for prosecuting those individuals bearing great responsibility for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. The national court system was responsible for hearing cases of those accused of planning the genocide or of committing serious atrocities, including rape. The traditional Gacaca community court system was re-established to bring about justice and reconciliation at the grassroots levels. In efforts to balance justice, truth, peace and security, the National

Unity and Reconciliation Commission, made use of programs and approaches embedded in the Rwandan cultural context. In light of its success, such a format I argue can be replicated in all areas of education.

Another example is training programs for students as workers to satisfy the industrial needs of the region, which can be paired on an equal footing with that of instilling humanist and communitarian principles inherent in African tradition instead of the wholesale application of imperial pedagogy. For example, Goura's (2012) extensive study on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) from critical perspectives in SSA portrays the varied manners in which TVET can groom critically reflexive and participatory democratic citizens in SSA. Thus, these kinds of critical approaches I argue will produce citizens who remain attached to African values of what it means to be working to enrich one's community. An education that emphasizes such values is of tremendous benefit to curb for instance the hyper individualism currently being imparted by the neoliberal pedagogy.

Moreover, perhaps, the most pertinent application of critical pedagogy is in the civic sphere as the region attempts the process of cultivating and sustaining a democratic culture in line with the goals of Agenda 2063. An effective African democracy requires a vigorous and robust education system that produces informed and knowledgeable decision makers, policymakers, employers, educators and students all engaged in collective civic engagement, capable to understand, interrogate and articulate upon the social dynamics of their society to enact social change. However, within the SSA context, the term democracy is usually relegated to the voting process of the liberal democratic or

a ‘majoritarian democracy’, which are based on an inorganic system imposed upon SSA by the dictates of the imperial project. The accompanying current civic education in the African context according to Eten (2015) is not to engender a participatory environment, but to concentrate on support for public institutions and policies to further these forms of democracy rather than develop critical thinking skills. Undoubtedly, SSA is in desperate need of competent workforce to further its social and economic development. These requirements should not however be at the expense of transferring skills and training in citizenship, leadership and self-determination.

This minimal exposure to the fundamentals of a democratic culture creates a vacuous relationship with the electoral process and accountability between the leaders and the led. Consequently, Ghanaian philosopher Kwasi Wiredu (1995) is prominent amongst Africans who are advocating that the whole concept of democratic culture must include African epistemic formations to include dialogue and consensual decision-making processes. Such a governance model is according to Ajei (2016), “an indigenous, non-party democratic system rooted in the traditional African humanist and communitarian conceptions of the individual and the community, in which political decisions are characteristically reached by consensus” (p. 225)

Therefore, a reformed education structure, relevant to African conditions is one that augments civic education and social studies curriculum by highlighting information and practices that enable Africans to interrogate the plethora of governmental instruments, institutions, societal structures and their conjoint effectiveness to respond to their African reality. Particularly democracy as is now configured and practiced in SSA

for the foreseeable future is the site where our leaders assume power and control of our nations. It is through this authority bequeathed to them in their leadership capacity that allows them to ultimately set the course forward for our respective nations. It is therefore imperative that citizens are aware of the magnitude of leadership positions in their daily lives as well as their role as voters in perpetuating a leadership class that does not benefit them. An African-centered critical pedagogy is expected to nourish the capacity for students to engage in critical reflections about the inconsistencies in society at large and to develop as praxis the characteristics of change agents to address them. A prerequisite for their roles as voters is that students ought to be aware of the criteria for electing leadership (not just based on tribal/ethnic/linguistic/ alliances as is currently the case).

Youth must also have opportunities to be equally trained in leadership capacities and expectations. They are to be groomed to understand that their position as leaders is to serve honorably if the need arises as change agents whom are so desperately needed in the region, and not compromise their positions of trust as is the case with current leadership class in SSA. Empowering future generation of Africans to serve SSA in this manner is a major step to establishing a democratic culture in SSA.

Lastly, a civic education ground in liberatory pedagogy is required to emphasize the origins of the current liberal majoritarian democratic systems, its shortcomings as well as its benefits. However, Africans must also be made aware that although alternatives to the current system such as the concept of consensual democracy as articulated by Wiredu (1994) and other Africans exists, the region should as a matter of necessity focus urgently on seeking alternative systems of governance capable, consistent

and more culturally appropriate for SSA needs to be promoted. A system of governance based on our social realities has a better chance of responding to the plight of all Africans, rather than the divisive and exclusionary model of liberal democracy that is imposed on SSA as a whole (Wiredu, 1994).

Nevertheless, the opposite is true in SSA. As I have mentioned, the purpose, role and function of education remain to prepare students as workers and consumers rather than be focused more on critical intellectual development so that students can develop sociopolitical consciousness. This impasse is unfortunately the reality of our education systems since Africans began to wholly internalize and exhibit the values of the imperial project. I argue that it is not enough to merely identify education as a tool to decrease poverty levels without making structural changes to the status quo or without presenting opportunities to understand the structures that sustains it and a constructively follow up plans to address them.

The prospect of an education that develops sociopolitical consciousness entails confronting our unresolved relationship with the imperial project. In other words, Africans are not allowed the space to conduct personal and collective reflection or autopsy of colonialism before being immediately plunged into the new phase of the imperial project. A starting point includes as I put forth in the section on Decolonizing Pedagogy, the opportunity to finally revisit these ghosts by firstly developing an intimate knowledge of its structures and mechanisms, our place within the system and the manners in which all these aspects interact to perpetuate poverty and underdevelopment in SSA.



Another important component of such an education is to allow citizens opportunities to take action to change their miserable living conditions. A sustainable decolonized education grounded in critical pedagogy also entails resurrecting pre-colonial societal practices that emphasizes collective responsibility and use what is relevant from our third way knowledge base to find solutions. In a collectivist context, the knowledge of a doctor is reoriented to not only benefit individuals, but also to serve the community as a healer, likewise a lawyer is a social justice practitioner, an engineer must be a creator of varied products that is of use and vital to the community, an economist should constantly be engaged in forcing others to ponder on ways to address our continuous debt status, reduce aid dependency, how to industrialize; and finally an educator must ask what is the role of education to make all these visions possible? In short, this model of education I conceptualize above I argue, is consistent with western critical thought as well as that of African theorist to address SSA's challenges.

### **Logistics of and Impediments to Implementation**

My ideas and recommendations regarding a restructured education system that aligns with Agenda 2063 is part of a joint effort to speak back to the continued crisis of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. These recommendations are based on certain assumptions. Firstly, even though the peoples of SSA are united by their collective and shared historicity within the structures and mechanisms of the imperial project, as I have represented in preceding chapters, the region is deeply complex given its varied historicity, religious beliefs, socio-cultural and linguistic diversity. Also, although Agenda 2063 has embedded within it common policies on education, a complete

harmonization is still in the development phase, so member nations are not yet obligated to adhere to certain guidelines. Lastly, although all the nations of SSA are part of the AU and therefore Agenda 2063, there are variances in commitment due to level of development, resources, endowments and priorities to its declarations and goals (DeGhetto et al, 2016).

As a result of the above, my vision is intended as a broad series of recommendations that considers the reality of the situation with flexibility in implementation. In other words, the proposals can be adapted, refined and implemented in varied formats as well as be adopted in a sequential phased application. For example, an African nation state that prioritizes education as a country-specific part of the Agenda 2063 can select which area/s is/are most pertinent and adapt these elements in order benefit their citizens. However, the proposals are not intended to be a quick panacea for all that ails SSA. Rather, I envisage a gradual and incremental change to the lives of Africans by proposing these suggestions. In this way I am now part of a leg of a relay race joining many other Africans who have and will continue to bring our plethora of resources or ‘funds of knowledge’ (Moll et al, 1992) together to further this particular stage of the journey on how to address the twin issues of poverty and underdevelopment in our region.

Nevertheless, I anticipate, like other Africans who continue to voice alternative viewpoints, certain impediments and limitations to any plan of action to detach ourselves from the imperial project. In the first place, as I mentioned above, the variance in interest and commitment by AU nations to Agenda 2063 and by implication its education

component presents an immediate impediment to any individual and or collective action by states to implement the recommendations. Another concern is the achievability and sustainability of Agenda 2063 itself. There have been several post-independent SSA's initiatives which have not delivered on their expected goals and promises. It is therefore possible to foresee a scenario where educational aspects of Agenda 2063 fall through the cracks from a lack of commitment or interest, as according to Dipholo & Biao (2013), education goals are usually sidelined when resources become unavailable. This is present state of affairs in SSA. The institution of education continues to be severely impacted by the conditionalities of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) which recommends that SSA nations decrease government spending on social programs. As such, there is a sustained severe shortage in all areas of education, but particularly so at the higher education levels.

The lack of progress in previous African centered projects can be traced to the lack of meaningful commitment of African leaders to the goals of these initiatives as well as interference from the imperial project with the sole aim of safeguarding the status quo. From overt colonization to the present day subtle neoliberal globalization, the imperial project has survived in different guises during the course of history by an obvious perfection of control methods and wealth extraction. As a result, it permeates and is pervasively entrenched though all aspects of SSA. Even the Agenda 2063 as currently configured is littered with neoliberal prescriptions as evidenced by the African Union's commitment to ensure that the SDGs are met. I have earlier detailed Agenda 2063's commitment to fulfill SDG4, the education requirements of the goals. This entrenched

nature of the imperial project is a major impediment to institute any change such as education reform. Likewise, it is not in the interest of African leaders to enact meaningful changes to these structures and practices as they benefit from the status quo. Therefore, resistance is to be expected at any efforts in transforming SSA for the betterment of its people.

Lastly, although in this dissertation, I have argued for education to play a role in addressing the current SSA's dilemma, I also on the other hand acknowledge its limitations. In other words, I support Hackman's (2005) view that "no pedagogical approach is a panacea" (p.103). Nevertheless, I believe that a critical education paradigm in SSA is a starting point to addressing the generational cycles and deep-seated poverty and underdevelopment consequences in that continent, and to formulating a foundation for sustainable development.

### **Conclusions**

In a continent replete with natural and human resources, the poverty and underdevelopment dilemma in SSA is a paradoxical tragedy. The dominant narrative in explaining this contradiction in popular lay understandings as well as institutional and academic discourse is from a predominantly *civilizing mission* or '*la mission civilisatrice*' perspective. Within the ahistorical representation of the civilizing mission, the pre-imperial historical realities of the region become irrelevant as African 'civilization' only began at imperial contact. In addition, SSA is presented as endowed with human and natural resources. However, because of the inherent natural and characteristic deficiencies, Africans are unable to advantageously utilize these resources.

It is therefore the divine or manifest destiny for the white man to undertake the burden to civilize the Africans into the European ways of life.

However, my argument in this dissertation is to the contrary. I maintain that the imperial project plays an integral role in sustaining this predicament of SSA. I have used the term imperial project in this dissertation to convey that access to raw materials and other resources characterized and continue to characterize the relationship between imperialism and SSA. Furthermore, not only the causes, but also potential redress of poverty and underdevelopment dilemmas are held hostage to the influence of the imperial project through neocolonial structures (comprising of decolonization agreements, the cold war and neoliberal globalization) and corresponding political, economic and socio-cultural mechanisms as these nations strive to keep SSA under their spheres of influence. Nevertheless, the institution of education as a socio-culture mechanism offers much promise to release the African psyche from the hegemonic influences of the imperial project. Thus, my goal in this conceptual dissertation is to answer my research question: How can the understanding of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA through critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory open up possibilities for reframing/reconceptualizing education to address these challenges within the framework of Agenda 2063?

Contrary to the prevailing uncritical narrative of the *civilizing mission*, I have laid out my findings and arguments from critical perspectives sequentially throughout the course of my chapters in response to the research question. The evidence I present contribute to an understanding of the intricate, overt and covert neocolonial methods of

continued imperial presence in all sectors of governance in SSA, through the structures and corresponding mechanisms that uphold poverty and underdevelopment. Further still, critical lenses lay bare the African post-colonial comprador elite class as well as the African subalterns whom in our various contributory roles as enablers are a necessary fulcrum in the perpetuation of the imperial system of control in the region.

Agenda 2063 in theory is a good roadmap for Africa with commendable economic and social objectives that offers much potential for addressing SSA's urgent circumstance. However, its close alignment to the neoliberal ideology equally poses serious concerns as to its viability to enact much need change. Therefore, as part of this journey in a longer plan for a gradual and incremental change in the region, I have also argued for further and deeper reflection by the framers of the agenda so as to establish a sustainable education process that will facilitate the deconstruction of these hegemonic patterns so prevalent in the African ways of knowledge acquisition and production. A robust, relevant and critical pedagogy organic to the realities of SSA must play a major contributory role to respond to the realities of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA, rather than the current pedagogy that privileges the cultivation of a neoliberal self in antithesis to the cultural context of the African people.

This dissertation is not meant as an exhaustive effort in researching this topic. As I have pointed out, scholars have been and will continue to respond to the realities of poverty and underdevelopment as well as initiating culturally relevant education paradigms to address them. As indicated below, there are many more avenues and areas that must be addressed and even more alternative perspectives that must be brought to

bear on these topics. However, this dissertation is my attempt to critically assemble all the various combined factors that contribute to poverty and underdevelopment in SSA. Furthermore, it is my best effort to bring in critical and reflexive language to our understandings of poverty and underdevelopment as well as within our systems of education; given that such discourse is rare and scarce in our understanding of these issues.

Critical theory, critical pedagogy and post-colonial theory have allowed me to engage in a deep exploration of the issues of poverty and underdevelopment in the context in which I am familiar and where the applications of these critical perspectives are relatively uncommon. However, within the broader context, my findings and recommendations are valid and relevant not only in SSA, but in all other parts of the colonized world as well as other communities across the world that are affected by the rhetoric of neoliberal globalization. By helping us examine how systems and structures operate to marginalize certain individuals and communities, these critical lenses are germane in all contexts where oppression occurs.

Finally, my representations of the realities of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA is intended to offer a wholesome rendition as much as possible in order to highlight these oppressive structures that currently ensures SSA's state of affairs as well as the subsequent effects on Africans, so attention can be given to these topics.

Despite these dire representations, as I state severally in the chapters of this dissertation, I affirm in the strongest of terms the resilience, strength and indomitable spirit of the African people. As a region, it has survived the holocaust of the slave trade.

It was Africans who used imperial education as a vehicle for independence. Since independence, Africans immediately grasped the dynamics of postcolonial SSA and the ways in which the imperial project subverts its future and have since continued to put forth alternative narratives in varied ways.

African resilience is also readily apparent in the preservation of pre-colonial ways of knowing which continues at the community and village level where a majority of Africans reside. In these communities, traditional ways of living such as, governance models, education, traditional healing methods as well as traditional values such as bonds and ties of kith and kin, community, spirituality, kindness, pride, dignity, love and care and respect for others and humanity in general are essential ways of being as inhumanity breeds oppression.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

There is a plethora of research on poverty and underdevelopment in SSA, with each research findings oriented towards putting forth claims and findings to support or contest against biases. For example, a significant amount of available literature mostly focuses on SSA's economic and financial relationships with the purveyors of neoliberal globalization such as the IFIs, the IMF, the WB and the UN: the donor and foreign aid institutions. Consequently, these studies are predominantly focused on pursuing that paradigm, without significant reference to the negative consequences of the enacted policies. However, I make the claim that the topic of globalization and neoliberal globalization are still novel phenomenon that Africans have succumbed to in a hegemonic manner without a full grasp of its contours, methods of implementation and



the consequences of neoliberal policies in everyday life. Yet still, its educational impact is relatively unpacked within the corridors of power and amongst the general population at large. Therefore, pertinent data from research findings that explore and detail such understandings is vital for Africans if we are to successfully navigate this new phase of the imperial project.

In addition, education guidelines under Agenda 2063 seems to further the narrative of access to a mechanistic nature of education that will create neoliberal subjects. Conversely, education as a specific tool that will allow Africans the capacity to engage critically to address the pressing circumstances of their lives - poverty and underdevelopment appears to be a novel and uncharted path within the confines of Agenda 2063. I therefore urge an engaging of research on the questions posed on the sections further above in this chapter under Interrogating dominant epistemologies - objective reviews of education systems and Critical Reflections as perhaps necessary starting points.

With specific reference to my presentation of a vision of education aligned to Agenda 2063, an empirical study is the next logical step to bring the plan to fruition. As I mentioned previously, Africans from independence leaders such as Nkrumah (1970); Nyerere (1974 & 1976); Machel (in Woolman (2001); Keita (in Yena 1978); Mazrui (1978) and Shizha, (2013) and have continued articulating on the urgency to align education with the goal of improving the dismal realities of life in SSA. Even though these voices remain marginalized, I presume that there are educational spaces where such exchanges of knowledge transfer still occur. Therefore, such a study will not only

include seeking out spaces of resistance that are engaged in ‘submit but subvert’ in SSA that are already implementing these ideas or versions of it, but also other potential structures that can support programs that allow for critical reflections in any part of SSA. I envisage that these spaces, such as the African Institute for Leaders and Leadership (AFLI) headquartered in South Africa and the Movement for Economic Freedom (MEF) in Zambia, I mention in Chapter I can become foundational stepping stones to further push alternative frameworks for implementing the education components of Agenda 2063 for tangible and sustainable development of SSA.

### **Closing Reflections**

It has been a personal roller coaster of emotions, during the course of writing this dissertation. I have felt a sense of vindication as my presupposed beliefs and assumptions on poverty and underdevelopment were confirmed in available scholarship. Nevertheless, I have also been challenged to confront several of these taken for granted beliefs. My decision to analyze poverty and underdevelopment is not a vacuous endeavor. Although I currently reside in the US, I spent my formative years in my country of birth Sierra Leone and still maintain close familial, professional and business ties. Therefore, similar to the experiences of a majority of Africans, I am well acquainted with the depth and magnitude of poverty and underdevelopment that plagues SSA nations.

Notwithstanding, within this cultural context, I identify as a post-colonial African elite, conducting research about SSA based in a Western university. Consequently, even with such close ties to home, I still feel fragile in my role as post-colonial individual writing about SSA. Thus, I have sometimes struggled for authentic representations of

these realities. In other words, I am striving to present the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA in a comprehensive manner which highlights the hegemonic relationships between the imperial project and SSA, thereby negating the palliative piecemeal approach reminiscent of researchers who are not from the sociological milieu where the practices of neoliberal globalization are directly experienced (Amaizo, 2012).

However, through critical insights, my fears of facing issues of credibility have been tampered. I have come to understand that classification as a post-colonial individual does not necessarily preclude my understanding of SSA's challenges and the desire to seek redress. As a post-colonial elite my place of privilege must not however result in "the luxury of obliviousness" as portrayed by Johnson (2006). It must entail acknowledging the reality of my contradiction as part of the simultaneously empowering and impoverishing structure of the imperial project; whilst in the meanwhile struggling to not only resist and oppose, but do my utmost to bend it to reflect my ethical concerns for equality and humanity (Spivak 1988). As such, my engagement with the issues of poverty and underdevelopment is to ultimately seek to further understand their persistence in our various communities and hopefully seek avenues to change these realities.

My above position is consistent with that of our nationalists' independence leaders. Although they too were of the elite educated class, they were however able to engage with the circumstances of their times as per Johnson and Spivak above to articulate on a viable future for SSA. Even though their various visions were rudely interrupted by the imperial project, I have also been pondering as I write this dissertation on an alternative vision of a SSA if their ideas were brought into fruition. The AU's

current framework for closer integration with SSA nations is for example an idea inaugurated by Nkrumah all those many years ago, who envisioned SSA as a contiguous land mass that can in unison mitigate the burgeoning advances of the imperial project. Instead of a unified SSA, the region is as depicted by Amaizo (2012) a patchwork of mainly weak and unviable separate nation states which are unable to withstand the external exploitations of the imperial project and are consequently languishing in the depths of despair as I present in the preceding chapters of this dissertation.

Furthermore, although I was aware of the integral connections of poverty and underdevelopment in SSA to the imperial project, I was unfamiliar with its formidable global structures and pervasive nature within SSA and the extent to which every facet of African life is impacted by its reach. I encountered this presence while writing this dissertation as I became aware of the marginalized and underrepresented voices of African scholars on the topic. Alatas (2000) describe this phenomenon as intellectual imperialism to denote that even though African scholars write on various aspects regarding poverty and underdevelopment, their version of scholarships are not too prevalent in scholarly manuals in the Western academe. It was through personal connections established with other Africans interested in the promise of a viable SSA that I encountered other voices and writings on topics pertinent to SSA in general. This marginalization is an example of the fulfillment of Luis's (2006) warning that Africa has become a footnote on academic pages.

Finally, I conclude with the admission that I am wavering between hope and despair for the future of SSA. The dismantling of these oppressive structures that holds

much sway over the lives of African seems an insurmountable task. But as critical persuasions encourage hope, I must internalize as fact that domination is never so overwhelming that it precludes possibilities for resistance. Therefore, the capacity and willingness of Africans to demand change must be nurtured through the ongoing process of each generation carrying and passing the baton as part of a relay race to hold ourselves accountable and our leader's feet over fire to demand change. To demand concrete, feasible agendas and plans of action to end the poverty and underdevelopment misery that SSA continues to be embroiled in. As change will not be realized until the urgency for change is demanded.

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